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20-PAGE PULLOUT

DAILY NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

THE TIMES

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BORJA SUAREZ/REUTERS

The darkest hour

Yesterday evening's total solar eclipse as seen from Spain. Millions of Britons also benefited from clear skies to watch as up to 90 per cent of the sun was covered by the moon in Europe's most significant eclipse in more than 25 years. Reports, pages 2•3

Barbecue ban to help stub out wildfires

Oliver Wright
Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

Disposable barbecues could be banned every year during the summer months to prevent wildfires, Andy Burnham said, as he urged retailers to withdraw them from sale immediately.

The prime minister yesterday chaired a meeting of the government's Cobra emergency committee to address the impact of Britain's summer of heatwaves. Temperatures are due to rise as high as 38C in parts of the country today.

Burnham warned that the hot weather could last "for some weeks yet" and urged retailers to withdraw disposable barbecues from sale in an effort to prevent wildfires from breaking out. England and Wales have seen as many wildfires in 2026 so far as there were in the whole of last year.

"We are seeing multiple serious incidents across the country," Burnham said after the Cobra meeting.

"There is advice to the public here not to use disposable barbecues. We have today confirmed ... the voluntary framework restricting the retail sale of those disposable barbecues is being extended. I would ask all retailers big and small to adhere to that framework."

He added: "Longer term, we will look at whether a temporary ban in the summer months is justified."

There have been 1,017 wildfires in England and Wales this year, according to data from the National Fire Chiefs Council — as many as last year's record-breaking total.

Environmental policies that encourage rewilding were criticised last night for exacerbating the wildfires. Andrew Gilruth of the Moorland Association told the Daily Mail: "We simply have far, far too much vegetation covering our landscape."

Heatwave reports, page 9

Firms' fury at zero hours reform

● Burnham's proposals predicted to pile £3bn costs on businesses ● Hospitality trade and youth employment hit hardest

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

Plans to restrict zero hours contracts could impose "eye-watering" costs of up to £3 billion a year on business, the government has admitted.

An official impact statement for Angela Rayner's employment reforms found that they would have a negative impact on companies by forcing them to contend with new red tape, extra staffing costs and lost revenue.

The government analysis found that sectors such as hospitality and retail, that have already borne the brunt of increases in national insurance and the minimum wage, would be worst affected by the changes.

It also warned that the plans would make it harder for employers to respond to changes in demand, with potential knock-on impacts on revenue and investment.

The government is consulting on the proposals, which could give new rights to all workers on zero hours contracts. At present such contracts do not specify a minimum number of hours to which workers are entitled.

The reforms would force companies to give staff a guaranteed number of hours a week, reflecting their current workload. It would also require firms to give workers "reasonable notice of shifts" and to pay them for shifts that have been "cancelled, curtailed or moved at short notice".

In an assessment, officials calculated that if all employees on zero hours contracts were included in the scheme then it could cost the businesses £2.9 billion a year. However, if ministers restricted the new rights to those working fewer hours, then the cost to business could fall to £1.1 billion a year. It added that the minimum cost of the policy to business would be £350 million a year if only those workers on the fewest hours were included.

The document said the government believed there would be wider benefits of the scheme to the economy.

It claimed the measures would support growth through improved worker wellbeing and engagement, increasing productivity, while encouraging better workforce planning and creating a more level playing field for employers who already provide secure and predictable work. However, it said these benefits were hard to quantify.

Business groups reacted with anger at the cost of the changes, which they warned would pile further pressure on struggling companies.

They also said the plans would hurt young people by discouraging firms from taking on short-term workers to meet additional demand.

Kate Nicholls, chair of UKHospitality, the trade body, said: "The eye-watering cost of these reforms comes at the worst possible time for hospitality businesses, arriving on the heels of more than £5 billion in additional employment costs in the past two years.

"More than 100,000 jobs have already been lost in hospitality as a result, and the extraordinarily high cost of employment continues to restrict job opportunities, particularly for young people. This is on top of hospitality being disproportionately hit by

Continued on page 7

Today's highlights

8am **Jacqui Smith**, the skills minister
10.30am Tech entrepreneur **Bryan Johnson**, below, on his mission to live for ever
1.20pm **Lewis Wilson**, a vice-president of the National Union of Students, on student loans
1.40pm **Peter Woodbridge**, author of *Dream Machine*, on the use of AI in film-making
3.30pm Music video director **Tim Pope** discusses his work with Queen, the Cure and David Bowie

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TODAY'S EDITION

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Undercover at the Church of Scientology

The Story

A Scientology whistleblower told Times journalist Tom Ball that the church's Edinburgh branch had children as young as 13 working there during school hours. When the allegation was denied, Tom went undercover to investigate.

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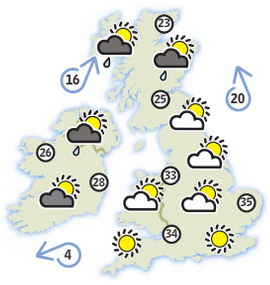
THE WEATHER



Cloudy with spells of rain in the north and west, dry and very hot elsewhere. **Full forecast, page 55**

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Britain goes over the

Whole nation stopped for the most significant celestial event since 1999, write **Kaya Burgess** and **David Sharrock**

Britain ground to a halt to gaze at the skies last night to witness the most spectacular eclipse to be seen from these shores in a generation, leaving only a crescent of sun as a fiery sliver above the western horizon.

From castle turrets, church towers, football stadiums, rooftop bars, river cruises, office blocks and observatories, we put on eclipse glasses and held up pinhole cameras and colanders to see more than 90 per cent of the sun's disc blocked out by the moon.

It was the fullest eclipse to pass over Britain since 1999, the likes of which will not be seen again for several decades. Most of England had clear skies and perfect viewing conditions. The partial eclipse ranged from 95.7 per cent coverage of the sun in Penzance to 89.7 per cent in Norwich. It lasted about two hours, reaching its fullest extent between 7.05pm and 7.16pm before the new moon moved on in its orbit.

In eastern Greenland, western Iceland and parts of Spain, people were treated to a total eclipse revealing the corona, the sun's atmosphere, in all its beauty, as it barely hung above the horizon shortly before sunset in places such as Mallorca. It was only a minute, but Spain became the centre of the astronomical world. The moon's shadow crossed the country from Galicia to the Balearic Islands, turning a band of the peninsula dark.

Spain's first total solar eclipse in more than a century drew scientists, tourists and eclipse chasers from across the world to hillsides, beaches and villages that had spent months preparing for the invasion.

Many people in Britain had managed to acquire eclipse glasses. Others were using pinholes and colanders to project images on to paper. Some were using their phones in selfie mode to watch the eclipse behind them, and a few were defying medical advice by looking directly at the sun with only sunglasses.

The verges of Selsley Common, above Stroud, were crammed with awkwardly parked cars as crowds gathered in the Cotswold escarpment for a panoramic view over the Severn estuary. Picnic rugs and camping chairs were spread out on the tinder-dry grass as friends and family groups gathered to drink, chat and, perhaps unwisely in the conditions, smoke.

Severndroog Castle in southeast London and Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland hosted viewing events. Special eclipse river cruises ran along the River Thames. A rock bar in Birmingham was offering "eclipse cocktails" and the Roof East rooftop venue in London was handing out free eclipse glasses with drink orders.

Seraphina Newton, seven, was with her parents, Camilla and Dave, on Telegraph Hill in southeast London. "It's fun, it's fun, and it looks like a moon, and also, it feels really magical," she said. "I love it." Elsewhere on the hill there were boom boxes, beers and people attempting to see the sun with a stack of ten sunglasses.

A scramble to find eclipse glasses continued until the 11th hour. One central London shopkeeper told the BBC he had sold 26,000 pairs.

Up to 300 people were queueing to buy pairs for £5 each from a pop-up seller in Spitalfields Market on Tuesday. Other sellers were approaching those in the queue and offering pairs for more than double the price.

John Lewis said colander sales were up by 40 per cent year-on-year. That was because people without eclipse glasses were following advice to direct the sun's rays through the holes of a colander to see a projection of the eclipse on a piece of paper.

Some people in Bolton were able to look directly at the sun through one of the only safe alternatives to eclipse glasses: using welding helmets with glass of a sufficiently dark shade.

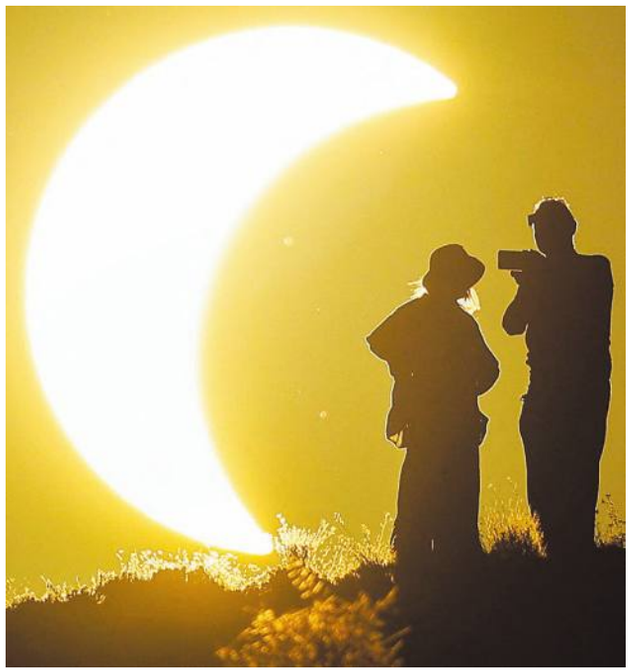
Arsenal's pre-season friendly against Como 1907 kicked off in north London during the eclipse. Many fans had delayed entering the stadium to see it.

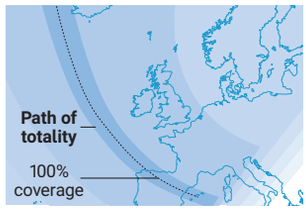
A long queue formed outside the Royal Observatory to watch from its position at the top of the park overlooking the Old Royal Naval College. A small protest of about 30 staff from Royal Museums Greenwich over pay and conditions was taking place. Protesters held banners with slogans including "Don't eclipse your biggest stars".

From Greenwich Park, Aja Lilit was in a more reflective mood and joked that the eclipse "looked like a birthday present from the universe".

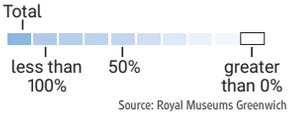
Additional reporting by Will Humphries, Poppy Koronka and Alex Farber

Thousands of eclipse-watchers gathered at the Olympic Park in Munich as countries across Europe enjoyed differing views. People were treated to a total eclipse in Spain, where one of the best places to view the event was the Astrophysical Observatory of Javalambre, below, in Arcos de las Salinas, near Valencia





Eclipse coverage



Source: Royal Museums Greenwich

moon for eclipse of the century

CHRISTIAN HARTMANN/REUTERS; FARIHA FAROOQUI/REUTERS; WILL WALKER/NNP; JOEL GOODMAN/LNP; OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA

The late evening sun meant Spain had some of the best views of the eclipse, but the event also drew watchers in, from left, Gateshead, Bolton and a cruise ship off Greenland

The rarest sight? Spare safety specs

Many big retailers had sold out of protective glasses before Britain's best solar eclipse in decades.

Convenience stores, national parks and the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, southeast London, all exhausted their supplies. The observatory said it had sold its entire stock of about 15,000 pairs in the last month.

Experts said only glasses that were ISO 12312-2 certified for the safest eye protection should be used to view the eclipse. Skygazers were warned against relying on sunglasses for an event that could cause lasting damage to one's vision after even brief exposure.

Mohamed Elalfy, president of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists, had said the safest way to enjoy the event was to observe it indirectly — which included watching a live broadcast. "Looking directly at the sun during a solar eclipse can cause damage to the retina, potentially damaging the cells responsible for sharp central vision," he said. "The retina has no pain receptors, so people will not feel the damage as it happens.

One salesman offered glasses for £50 per pair in east London yesterday

"Symptoms may only become apparent several hours later and can include blurred vision, a central blind or dark spot, distorted vision, reduced colour perception and increased sensitivity to light.

"While some people recover over weeks or months, others can be left with permanent visual impairment.

After the total eclipse in 1999, the royal college reported about 70 cases of people experiencing vision problems afterwards. About 40 per cent of those affected had looked at the eclipse for less than a minute.

Hours after yesterday's event came the peak of the annual Perseid meteor shower, which is produced as the planet ploughs through a stream of dust left behind by the comet Swift–Tuttle. Each tiny grain strikes the atmosphere at over 130,000mph, burning up in a flash that takes the appearance of a shooting star.

Grid operator's gloomy alert over energy demand

Adam Vaughan Environment Editor

The body responsible for keeping Britain's lights on called for power stations to help it cope with yesterday's partial solar eclipse, hours after saying the event's impact would be minimal.

The National Energy System Operator (Neso) said on Tuesday that it had been planning for the impact of the event for more than a year and was ready for the challenge.

The government-owned body said it had worked closely with the Met Office to model the effect of shadows and light levels on electricity demand, as well as estimating the impact on the amount of solar power generated. However, Neso subsequently issued an electricity margin notice for the peak period of 6pm to 8pm yesterday.

The formal measure, issued several times this summer amid record heat and increased energy demand from air conditioning, asks electricity generators to come forward offering extra capacity before an anticipated crunch. Neso then cancelled the notice at about 1pm after securing sufficient capacity.

It said planning for this eclipse was more complicated than the last big one in 1999 because it would last longer and was happening in high temperatures. While 6pm to 8pm is known by Neso as the "critical evening peak", when people return home, the eclipse could have reduced electricity demand as people went outdoors to watch.

News

WILLIAM LAILEY/SWNS

Flushing blade Naomi Collick, curator at Chiddingstone Castle in Edenbridge, Kent, inspects a 200-year-old sword found in the estate's lake after water levels fell

More than 3,800 civil servants never have to go into the office

George Greenwood
Investigations Reporter

Thousands of civil servants at the department tasked with getting people back into the workplace never have to attend the office themselves, The Times can reveal.

The Department for Work and Pensions, which is responsible for government employment policies, has disclosed that 2,413 of its staff members are not required to attend the office.

Across eight government departments that provided full responses to freedom of information requests, 3,884 officials enjoy similar deals, including 688 at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and 492 at the Department for Education.

In some cases, civil servants had not attended the office in more than two years. The Department for Transport recorded 82 such cases, while 71 staff members at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government were not recorded as visiting its offices for over a year. It is not known why.

There are growing concerns about public sector productivity as the civil service struggles to deal with the long tail of the coronavirus pandemic.

According to figures published by the Office for National Statistics, public sector productivity still lies below pre-pandemic levels.

Productivity growth remains anaemic, rising by 0.1 per cent in the first quarter of this year compared with the same period last year. Productivity contracted by 0.3 per cent in the previous quarter year-on-year.

The same pattern of attendance seen in Whitehall is repeated in local government, FoIs show, with some councils confirming they are offering similar, permanent, work from home deals.

FoI responses showed that Southend council in Essex employed 197 of its staff on terms that required no office attendance, Blaenau Gwent council in Wales said 121 of its staff were free never to come in, and Torbay council in Devon recorded 65 of these cases.

Of the 297 UK local authorities who responded to FoI requests, only a quarter kept some sort of centralised record of how often staff were attending the office. A total of 204 local authorities provided information about disciplinary activity related to levels of office attendance, with almost 90 per cent saying they had no cases recorded.

The Times reported this week that some civil servants were still spending fewer than two days a week in the office, despite rules requiring them to be at their desks at least 60 per cent of the time.

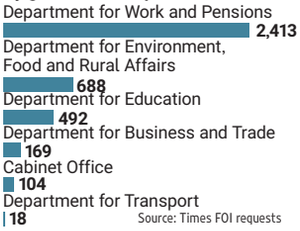
Alex Burghart, shadow chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, said: "Flexible working is one thing, but with thousands of staff never turning up at the office, taxpayers have a right to ask if they're getting value for money."

The government said: "This data represents a tiny fraction of staff, including those who travel across the country working hard running public services, and those with legally required adjustments that allow them to work."

Torbay council said offering flexibility, including permanent home working, helped retain skilled professionals.

Permanent work-from-home staff

By government department



Source: Times FOI requests

Scotland spends £2,720 more per head than rest of UK

Greig Cameron Scottish Business Editor

People living in Scotland are £2,720 better off a year than those in the rest of the UK due to a record "Union dividend".

Official data from the Scottish government, published as part of the Government Expenditure and Revenue Scotland (Gers) report, also shows historically high levels of public spending that has left Scotland with a £25 billion deficit. That is despite tax revenues also being at a record high, aided in part by the Westminster government increasing national insurance contributions.

Spending per person in Scotland was £22,281, against £19,561 for the UK as a whole. Unionist politicians said the figures highlighted the "significant" benefit of being in the Union, but nationalists suggested the data could not be taken to reflect the state of the economy of a future independent Scotland.

The annual Gers report covers the 12 months to the end of March. The pace of revenue growth for 2025-26 was quicker than the rise in spending, which helped to slightly narrow the deficit.

Decisions by SNP ministers to freeze the upper rates of income tax raised £1.5 billion, and Westminster's increase in employer national insurance added a further £2.4 billion in Scotland. North Sea oil and gas revenue fell from £4.5 billion to £3.9 billion; Scotland's share fell from £3.6 billion to £3.2 billion.

Scotland's net fiscal balance — the difference between revenue raised in Scotland compared with spending — was a notional deficit equivalent to 10.9 per cent of gross domestic product. The UK as a whole had a notional deficit of 4.2 per cent, which was one percentage point better than the previous year.

In cash terms, the Scottish deficit was £25.3 billion — about £600 million less than in the previous fiscal year.

Quintagram® No 2645

Solve all five concise clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Male farm animals (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Irrigate (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Relating to a 50th anniversary (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Turncoats, quislings (8)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Tyneside town (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	D	D	E
E	E	E	G	G	H	I	L
M	N	O	O	R	R	R	R
S	S	S	T	T	T	T	W

Solutions see T2 MindGames p15
Cryptic clues T2 MindGames p14

Road accidents report

Families of people killed in road accidents believe police are not treating driving offences with the seriousness that they deserve, a report said. Jo Shiner of the National Police Chiefs' Council said that the organisation would consider the findings and the recommendations of the report by Claire Waxman, the victims' commissioner, "in detail".

Frogs spoilt for choice

Female treefrogs experience "choice overload" when there are too many males to choose from, a study published in the iScience journal has found. Researchers from the University of Tennessee placed frogs in a room and found that more mating calls led to females becoming confused and in some cases "so overwhelmed that they didn't make any choice".

New Harry Potter cast

The actor Nicholas Hoult has been cast in series two of the forthcoming Harry Potter TV series, HBO announced. Hoult will play the professor Gilderoy Lockhart in the adaptation of the JK Rowling books. Harry Potter, Ron Weasley and Hermione Granger are played by Dominic McLaughlin, Alastair Stout and Arabella Stanton.

'Black hole star' found

Red spots in images from the James Webb telescope showing early parts of the universe may be a "black hole star" that is bigger than our solar system. It could help to explain how supermassive black holes formed, astronomers have said, as analysis in the journal Nature suggests it is an infant black hole surrounded by gas that feeds it as it grows.

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‘Monster’ Levy will die in prison

David Woode Crime Editor

The mother of a violent predator’s final murder victim said that her daughter had “saved countless women from your horrendous acts” after a judge handed him a whole-life order.

Simon Levy, a registered sex offender, targeted women who sometimes traded sex for money or drugs after a series of errors by the British Transport Police, the Metropolitan Police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

Levy, 40, raped a woman, who cannot be named, and left her for dead in a B&M car park in Tottenham, north London, on January 21, 2025.

While on bail for sexually assaulting female commuters on the London Underground, Levy murdered Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo, 53, in Walworth, south London, on March 16.

As his offending intensified, Levy was bailed twice at a magistrates’ court and went on to murder Sheryl Wilkins, 39, a mother of four, in the same Tottenham car park on August 24.

The bodies of Valencia-Trujillo and Wilkins were found face down in “strikingly similar” positions. Pathologists were unable to establish how they died.

Levy, who is partially blind, was convicted of two murders, two rapes and single charges of grievous bodily harm and intentional suffocation on August 7 after a trial at the Old Bailey. He had denied the offences.

Yesterday Judge Mark Lucraft KC, the recorder of London, told him that he had “ruthlessly exploited others for your own personal sexual satisfaction”.

A member of Wilkins’s family shouted “Yes” as the judge told Levy he would never be freed from prison.

He received two further life sentences, with minimum terms of 12 years, for the two rapes, to be served alongside the whole-life order.

Mary Wilkins, the victim’s mother, said that her “whole family has been shattered” by his actions. In a statement read on her behalf, Wilkins said: “You, Simon Levy, have completely destroyed our lives. You have done this before and wouldn’t have stopped.

“Our Sheryl has ended your chances of hurting anyone else, she lost her life to do this, but we truly believe Sheryl has saved countless women from being subjected to your disgusting and horrendous acts. You are a threat to all women.

“You took away our beautiful daughter. Sheryl’s children have been robbed not only of their mother but their future with her. Sheryl’s life mattered. You have changed our lives for ever but you cannot take away our love for Sheryl.”

The bereaved families held hands and wept as the packed courtroom listened to their tributes.

Nazly Johana Fuenmayor Valencia, Valencia-Trujillo’s daughter, said she lived with an “emptiness that can’t be filled”. Her Colombian-born mother was a “beautiful woman” and a beloved grandmother. She added: “My mum came to this country to give her children a better life and for safety. Instead her life was taken so cruelly. We don’t know why she was taken from us.”

The judge commended the courage of the rape survivor whose evidence helped to convict Levy. The woman, a classical pianist, said she was trafficked to Britain in 2012 and turned to drugs.

In a statement, read on her behalf, she said: “People have taken advantage of me all my life. I was with him [Levy] because of my addiction. He took my soul that night, and my dignity. I can’t forget the smell of his sweaty hands on my mouth. I thought I would die.”

The woman criticised a female Metropolitan Police officer for speaking to her “like a child” when she disclosed how Levy had raped her four days earlier. “Nobody ever listened to me,” she said.

She was arrested for breaching a community protection notice but told officers that she was travelling to hospital for treatment for a broken collar bone. Levy had “jumped on her with all of his weight”. She provided a description of Levy’s appearance and his address but they did not act on her compelling account, the court heard.

“He’s a monster who attacks girls who he thinks won’t go to the police. He thinks he won’t be stopped,” she said.

The judge said Levy had a “morbid fascination with sex, rape and crime”. A police analysis of his devices showed that he viewed news stories about John Worboys, the “black cab rapist”, and Christopher Halliwell, a former cab driver serving a whole-life sentence for murdering two women.

He also kept a file of documents entitled “My sex record” which detailed sexual positions and sex workers.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, said there had been a “whole system failing” and added that the force had apologised for its part in the case which had “really tragic consequences”.

He told the BBC: “We are seeing far too many cases, day in and day out, [of] knife carrier sex offenders who have been bailed when a few years ago they have been remanded in custody.”

The British Transport Police and CPS have acknowledged their errors. The Met referred itself to the police watchdog over its monitoring of Levy as a registered sex offender.

Levy, whose history of attacking women dates to 2018, was convicted of ten sexual assaults on the Tube, and a separate sexual assault on a prison officer, between April 2022 and May 2025.

He stood trial at Inner London crown court under a media blackout and was jailed for six years.

Families and public deserve answers on these failings, leading article, page 29

Sheryl Wilkins’s family released childhood photos of her as her killer Simon Levy was sentenced at the Old Bailey yesterday. Tributes were also paid by the family of Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo, below right, who was murdered by Levy last year

Seven years of sexual assaults

July 19, 2018: Simon Levy gropes a woman at an outdoor party in Camden northwest London.

August 26, 2018: Puts his hands down a woman’s trousers at Notting Hill Carnival, assaulting by penetration.

2019-2021: Levy is not arrested until October 2019. Convicted in August 2021 and jailed for three years. Judge does not impose a sexual harm prevention order — police and prosecutors choose not to appeal against the decision.

April 14, 2022: Sexually assaults female prison officer. The Metropolitan Police did not interview him until after his release despite CCTV evidence. Charged in 2025.

Feb-Oct 2023: Freed on licence. On October 24, he sexually assaults a woman on the Tube. British Transport Police (BTP) fail to identify him.

May-August 2024: Recalled to prison after being accused of rape. Not charged. Freed early.

October 21, 2024: Sexually assaults a woman on the Tube, and she records him trying to assault another woman. Police fail to identify him from CCTV footage.

Nov 2024: After assaulting two more women on trains, Levy is arrested by BTP. Freed on bail without charge.

Late 2024: Bail extended due to delays in organising ID parade. Risk status not upgraded even after he still sexually assaults women. BTP lets him keep Oyster card stolen from a bus driver.

Simon Levy: jailed for life

Jan 21, 2025: Violently rapes a sex worker, who gives police an account and accurate description of his address. Arrested in September.

March 16, 2025: Murders Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo, 53. Arrested weeks later and bailed. Her death is not classified as murder.

March 27, 2025: Sexually assaults another woman on the Tube.

April 3, 2025: BTP delays arrest for transport offences after learning he has been arrested on suspicion of murder. Extends bail to May 1.

May 2, 2025: Charged with five sex assaults. Appears in court and receives bail.

May-June 2025: Still attacking women on trains. Granted bail again.

May 2025: The Met closes January rape inquiry, citing difficulties tracing homeless victim.

July-August 2025: Misses two crown court hearings. No arrest warrants are issued.

August 24, 2025: Murders Sheryl Wilkins, 39. Only then is Valencia-Trujillo’s death looked at as murder, revealing CCTV placing Levy near her. Finally charged with murder and January rape.

November 25, 2025: Charged with murder of Valencia-Trujillo.

Asylum hotels in poor areas led

Constance Kampfner
Political Correspondent

A Labour MP has warned that a plan to move a thousand asylum seekers next to a small Yorkshire village will create a ratio of six men to every woman, branding the plans "unsuitable".

The government is planning to accommodate about 3,750 asylum seekers at three disused military sites, all of which are near small villages, as part of its strategy to phase out the use of asylum hotels.

Andy Burnham said on Tuesday that it could not be the case that "only the poorest communities in the country" should house people waiting for their applications to be processed and argued that more affluent areas of the UK would have to "play their part".

Anna Turley, the minister for border security and asylum, echoed his comments and said that housing asylum seekers in deprived parts of the UK had caused "civil unrest" and more affluent areas needed to take their "fair share".

However, Rachael Maskell, the MP for York Central, is one of several Labour politicians who told The Times she opposed proposals to convert former barracks in their areas and urged the government to reconsider plans to move 1,200 men to RAF Linton-on-Ouse in North Yorkshire.

Similar plans were scrapped in 2022 after fierce local opposition.

Maskell wrote to Turley and will meet Home Office officials this month to make her case. She said that politicians from all parties were "absolutely clear that this is not the right site", citing shortages of water, sewage capacity and electricity that would put a "huge demand on infrastructure". She said the base was situated next to a primary school and nursery, was served by only four buses into York a day and would result in a ratio of six men to every woman in the 600-person village.

"It's just the wrong site," she said. "The last government realised that, once they got into the detail. All we're saying to this government is that it's really important that they recognise that too, because the site is in a worse state now than it was when the government last looked at this."

Residents of Piddington, an Oxfordshire village of fewer than 400 people, symbolically voted in favour of seceding from the UK in protest against plans to rehouse 1,250 single adult male asylum seekers in a nearby disused Ministry of Defence storage depot without consultation. Tim McNally, chair of Piddington parish council, acknowledged the UK had a "massive problem" when it came to housing asylum seekers and said that the village was not asking to be "exempt from the national responsibility".

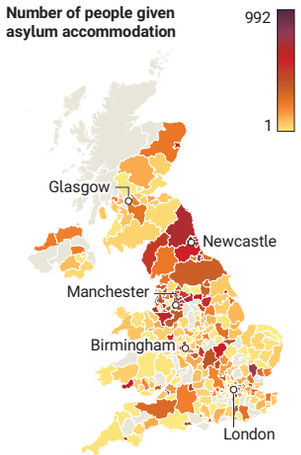
"The real issue here is about the scale, location and process," he told the BBC. "Just because we are what you might consider an affluent area it doesn't mean high capacity."

Residents were concerned, he added, about the number of people being able to freely enter and leave the site, which is next to a children's play area.

The Home Office is proceeding through an urgent Crown planning process to approve converting the former Bicester Garrison and has not yet published a formal planning application. Calum Miller, the Liberal Democrat MP for Bicester and Woodstock, has insisted that "residents deserve transparency and a proper chance to have their say".

As of March this year, 20,885 asylum seekers — 21 per cent of the total number — were living in hotels while awaiting decisions on their status and 72,768 (75 per cent) were in other accommodation. Ministers have announced the closure of 13 hotels housing asylum seekers bringing the total number below 160 — down from a peak of nearly 400 under the Conservatives.

Housing new arrivals



Figures as of March 31, 2026. Source: Home Office

Andy Burnham met carers concerned about the cost of living during a visit to the Oval Community Centre in Stevenage,

'I'm scared. We live in Piddington for its peace and safety'

Lara Wildenberg

Elsewhere, protests against asylum seeker centres have featured chanting crowds, England flags and occasional clashes with police but in the Oxfordshire village of Piddington residents have hosted a picnic and voted for a symbolic referendum to secede from the UK.

Among other fundraising ideas, some locals have proposed a dog show, a motorbike or classic car ride-out, as well as a sponsored walk around the circumference of the proposed site.

The picturesque village, mentioned in the Domesday Book, has a population of about 350. It has no shops, cafés or pub but does have a church and village hall with a pop-up-pub once a month, coffee mornings and short-mat bowls. Residents leave back doors open and send children on errands around the village.

However, the government is considering using a nearby disused Ministry of Defence storage depot, MoD Bicester, to house 1,250 single adult male asylum seekers.

Site A of the former Bicester Garrison is down the road from the village and close to Piddington's playing field, the Jubilee Reserve.

Residents have voiced concerns that asylum seekers — venturing into the village out of boredom — could cause trouble. Some suggested that they would gather and potentially drink at the playing field. Many women said that they would not feel safe to walk alone at night.

Derek Joy, 86, a retired master saddler, has lived in the village for 52 years and with his wife, Karen, 73, for the past 12. Karen said: "I've said to him I think we need to get a better gate. He won't let me get a dog but I'm thinking I will. I'm not a young lady any more, I'm scared really. It breaks my heart. We live here because we want this peace, this safety, this community."

Her husband said: "I understand that when you get 1,250 men, boys — wherever they're from — they're going to cause trouble. I'm worried they will take advantage of women ... and people's properties. I'm 86, if a bloke comes in now, I can't do anything about it."

Melise Witkin, 59, who runs a horse rug business, has lived alone in her cattle barn conversion for six years, with her four horses and three dogs.

She said that she would feel "vulnerable" walking around alone, with headlines about asylum seekers committing sexual offences in Essex and Brighton "in the back of her head".

"I would be scared," she said. "We don't know who these people are ... Whether they're criminals or whether they're really lovely guys, we don't know. That leaves an uncertainty. I think as a woman, a large group of men against one woman is frightening."

Alice and Ed West, both 42, came up with the idea of a Hollywood-style "Piddington" sign in the Jubilee Reserve, which children decorated with colourful handprints at the protest picnic. "We wanted to show the proximity of the sign to Site A," Ed, who works in property maintenance, said, adding that they took their three daughters, aged 11, 9 and 7, to the reserve every day. His wife, who has a textile business, said she might hesitate to go to the reserve on her own if the site were approved. "Because you don't know on any given day who's going to be there," she said.

Last month 96 per cent of residents voted in favour of having a symbolic referendum to secede from the UK.

Andy Burnham said that he would look into the concerns raised by "the good people of Piddington" but added that more affluent areas of the UK had to "play their part" to house asylum seekers. Residents said yesterday that their objections were unrelated to the wealth of the village but instead to the unsuitability of the area, which was isolated, near a busy road, and lacked streetlights and amenities.

Campaigns supporting asylum seekers also raised concerns, including Stand Up to Racism Oxfordshire and Asylum Welcome, which said that the site's isolation "makes successful integration harder and increases the risk of community tensions".

A government factsheet said that the site would provide "functional accommodation", "designed to be as self-sufficient as possible". The site would be a strict "no alcohol zone". It added that it would be run by an "experienced, specialist provider" with CCTV. Everyone entering or leaving would be required to sign in and out.

The Home Office has submitted an Urgent Crown Development application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government — a fast-track process which bypasses local planning authorities for a "nationally important development". In June Cherwell district council said that the Home Office had informed it of the application without any previous consultation or providing full details.

to civil unrest, minister claims

JAMES MANNING/PA;

Hertfordshire; Melise Witkin, who runs a horse rug business, is against using a site near Piddington for asylum seekers

PC Harper's mother tells Burnham: Don't let us down again

Aubrey Allegretti
Chief Political Correspondent
Steven Swinford Political Editor

The mother of PC Andrew Harper has told Andy Burnham "don't let us down again" after the prime minister said he would do everything in his power to stop the release of the officer's killers.

Burnham said on Tuesday that it was "incumbent" on him to do "everything within my power" to minimise the possibility of Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole being released early.

It represented a significant shift by Burnham, coming days after he appeared to concede he could not exempt the two men from the early release scheme, saying he had "pushed to the very limits of what is possible".

Yesterday, Debbie Adlam, PC Harper's mother, told GB News that Downing Street called her directly to inform her about the prime minister's change in position. She said she was now in a "limbo of hope again".

She said: "[I would say to Andy Burnham] really just to not let us down again because we've had so many ups and downs, and is it going to be that we've got to get our heads around this release being early?

"We're only waiting till the release date anyway, which isn't that far off, but every day of a sentence should be served. So just please don't let us down again, because we are pinning our hopes on this happening, and if it doesn't, I don't quite know where it leaves us. If [Andrew] is looking down [it] is actually really painful to think about how disappointed and how gutted he would be. But it's very painful for me to think and consider, what would he be feeling?"

Harper was a Thames Valley police officer who was killed in 2019 aged 28 when responding to a quad bike theft in Berkshire.

Before making his announcement last week, Burnham was presented with two options that would have prevented Cole and Bowers's release, but did not pursue them. Under the two proposals, all prisoners sentenced to either more than ten years or more than seven years would not have been eligible for early release. Cole and Bowers were each sentenced to 13 years for manslaughter.

Burnham chose a third option, based on the type of offence rather than on length of sentence. The decision means that prisoners convicted of rape, serious child sex and other grooming offences will remain behind bars. Officials made it clear that this choice meant Harper's killers would qualify for early release.

Burnham has now asked Alex Norris, the justice secretary, to find a solution to prevent the pair's release. It remains unclear what that will be, although ministers ruled out primary legislation.

No 10 had been looking at attempting to exempt the killers of emergency workers from the early release scheme.

However, it subsequently conceded that it would be unable to do so without blocking the release of all those convicted of manslaughter because of the risk of a legal challenge.

All 43 chief constables in England and Wales raised concern that an approach that did not distinguish the most grave offending "risks undermining public safety, victim confidence and wider confidence in the criminal justice system". They urged the prime minister to examine "every lawful option" to prevent the release of Bowers and Cole.

Martin Jones, the chief inspector of probation, warned that the early release plans risked leading to serious sexual violence and murders being committed. He told *Today* on BBC Radio 4 that the probation service was struggling to manage 258,000 cases.

"Ultimately, I'm not fully confident that the probation system will be able to cope with this massive work and there's a risk that things will go wrong," he said, urging ministers to consider what "essential" responsibilities it should conduct rather than "what's desirable".

Rayner paid £20k by property lobbyists

Aaliyah Ahmed

Angela Rayner has been accused of going cold on rent controls after accepting a £20,000 speaking fee from an estate agent lobby group.

About 20 protesters gathered at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government yesterday with a £20,001 cheque for Rayner — a nod to how much she was paid by Propertymark for her speech at a conference on June 12. The London Renters Union said it was "outbidding" the property industry for Rayner's attention and urged her to meet renters and consider the case for rent controls.

Rayner was paid £20,000 for a two-hour speaking engagement at the event held before she was reappointed housing secretary on July 20. Four days later, she ruled out rent controls, saying she did not believe freezes or controls were the answer to rising rents. Propertymark, an industry body for letting and estate agents, has campaigned against rent controls and lobbied against a rent freeze when it was reported that Rachel Reeves was considering the measure this year. Rayner had previously backed stronger protections for private renters, including a ban on no-fault evictions and unreasonable rent rises.

Rent controls put limits on how much landlords can charge or raise rents by. They can take different forms, such as limiting rent increases for existing tenants or capping rents when a property is let to a new tenant. When the Renters' Rights Act came into force in May, it limited rent increases to once a year and allowed tenants to challenge above-market rises but it did not introduce a general rent cap.

Jae Vail, a campaigner for the London Renters Union, said the group was not alleging that Rayner had broken any rules, but that the payment raised political questions. "During a cost of living crisis, Rayner has questions to answer about where her allegiances lie — with the estate agents, landlords and corporate developers, or with renters struggling with an ever-worsening affordability crisis," Vail added.

The group said that it wanted the government to introduce long-term rent controls alongside investment in council housing.

Holly Williamson from the campaign group Generation Rent, said the government's Renters' Rights Act was "a good start" but did not go far enough to address the cost of renting.

She said: "The government can and must go further. Introducing a limit on rent increases would be a major, free cost of living intervention that would help put more money in the pocket of millions of renters across the country."

Propertymark said speaker fees were part of the cost of running its annual conference and that Rayner was invited because of her role in decisions affecting the property sector. She was not a minister at the time. A spokesperson for Rayner said: "All earnings have been declared in line with the rules."

Business anger over huge cost of planned zero hours ban

Continued from page 1

business rates and our high rate of VAT. These reforms add yet more cost at a scale that far outweighs the cost benefits for employees."

The Federation of Small Businesses said the government risked "soaring unemployment" from its "chaotic approach to employment reform", while the British Retail Consortium (BRC) said the cost to employers of the scheme was "hugely disproportionate to the benefits for employees".

Helen Dickinson, the BRC chief executive, said: "Adding further costs [on businesses] when youth unemployment is soaring risks being a hammer-blow to young people's job prospects."

Neil Carberry, the chief executive of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, said he believed the true compliance cost of the plans had been underestimated. "Even so, the government's data suggests it will cost employers up to £8 million every day, or roughly the annual wage bill for 137,000 full-time workers between 18 and 20 on national minimum wage," he said. "It is time to think again."

However, the TUC said much of the cost to business would come only if shifts were cancelled at the last moment. "This is an upper estimate of a very wide range — and nearly half of this figure is based on the assumption that employers will continue to cancel shifts at short notice," it said.

"The aim of this legislation is to stop this practice and give variable-hours workers security and stability. So good employers have nothing to fear."

The government said: "We are absolutely committed to ending exploitative zero hours contracts, where workers bear all the financial risk when hours, shifts and earnings are unpredictable."

Labour is making unreasonable demands of business, Juliet Samuel, page 25

News

JEFF J MITCHELL/GETTY IMAGES

Top guns The Glorious Twelfth, the official start of the grouse hunting season, brought Barclay Dougall, Sue Irvine and Ilsa the dog to visit the Angus Glens, Scotland

Living longer, one step at a time

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Climbing the stairs instead of taking the lift every day could add years to your life, according to a study.

Regularly walking up flights of stairs cut the risk of dying from any cause by 24 per cent, while the risk of dying from a heart attack or stroke was down by 39 per cent, an analysis of data from 456,000 adults found.

Scientists hailed the "life-saving potential" of the activity, and said that workplaces and public buildings should encourage stair use as a "wider strategy to reduce heart disease".

Climbing about six flights of stairs a day appeared to have the greatest health benefit, but even a small "dose" of a few minutes a week helped to protect the heart and lower cholesterol.

Dr Sophie Paddock, from the University of East Anglia's Norwich Medical School, the lead author, said: "Unlike going to the gym or doing a workout, climbing the stairs is something you can easily fit into your day at home, at work or when you're out. It's a good option for people who don't have much time or easy access to exercise.

"So if you have the choice of taking the stairs or the lift, go for the stairs, as it will help your heart. Even brief bursts of physical activity have beneficial health impacts, and short bouts of stair-climbing should be an achievable target to integrate into daily routines."

The research, published in the American Journal of Cardiovascular Drugs, pooled data from nine previous studies. These had involved people aged 35 to 84 who were followed for an average of 14 years. As well as being less likely to die, people who climbed the stairs were also at lower risk of developing cardiovascular problems.

Co-author Professor Vassilios Vassiliou said: "Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death worldwide, with cases nearly doubling between 1990 and 2019, but it is largely preventable through a healthy lifestyle including regular physical activity, a heart-healthy diet, not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight and managing blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes.

"Taking the stairs is a practical and often overlooked way to build physical activity into daily life. We wanted to better understand how this everyday activity could have life-saving potential. With more than a quarter of adults worldwide failing to meet recommended activity levels, choosing to take the stairs offers a realistic, scalable intervention.

"Encouraging people to take the stairs in workplaces, public buildings and homes could form part of a wider strategy to reduce cardiovascular disease at population level."

The study was observational, and therefore cannot prove cause and effect. The results may be influenced by the fact that people who climb stairs are likely to already be healthier than those who stick to lifts or escalators.

Although the NHS recommends 150 minutes of exercise a week, even short bursts of activity such as climbing the stairs once a day have been shown to have meaningful benefits.

Last year a University of Sydney study found that doing one minute a day of vigorous activity helped to cut the risk of death compared to doing none at all.

Researchers believe that people who are already unfit have the most to gain from integrating short bursts of activity — including climbing the stairs — into their daily routine.

To reduce the risk of injury, take your new baby for a jog

Kaya Burgess Science Correspondent

Seeing a new parent out for a jog while pushing a baby in a buggy can spark a number of thoughts. Where do they find the energy? And are they not at risk of hurting themselves?

In fact, people who run with a pushchair are at lower risk of injury compared with those who jog without one, a study has found.

The buggy forces a jogger to take shorter strides, lean forward more and run at a slower and more consistent pace, while keeping their torso straighter with less twisting. This reduces the risk of overuse injuries such as muscle strain, back and knee pain, shin splints and tendonitis, researchers from Penn State Berks, a campus of the Pennsylvania State University, found.

Over 1,000 miles, those who ran with a pushchair had a 55 per cent lower risk of these injuries, the study found.

A pram can almost be compared to a Zimmer frame, Dr Allison Altman-Singles of Penn State said. However, her study focused mainly on the risk of muscular injuries rather than falling.

"When you run with a stroller [the American term for a buggy], you unweight the body a little bit, taking away some of the downward force by pressing on the handlebar," she said. "This change in biomechanics may relieve some of the stress on weight-bearing joints, which may explain why we see fewer injuries among stroller runners, particularly knee injuries."

The study followed 196 parents who regularly ran with a stroller during the first three years of their children's lives, and 55 parents who frequently ran during their child's infancy but without a pushchair. The two groups were similar in terms of age, height and weight.

The study, published in the journal PLOS One, found that 30 per cent of those who ran without a pushchair reported an injury, compared with 19 per cent of those who ran with one.

"The stroller also allowed people to run more when their child was between six and 12 months old," Altman-Singles said, adding that those who ran with buggies logged 34 per cent more miles.

RAF pilots told to prepare for battle ... against extreme weather

Charlie Parker

RAF pilots have been told to "urgently adapt" to extreme weather as soaring temperatures melt runways, create severe turbulence and scramble navigation systems.

Hotter and more volatile conditions are making significant changes to aviation, officials have said. Global warming is creating increasingly unpredictable wind patterns, more frequent "rapid-onset" storms and reducing visibility via wildfire smoke and fog, according to the RAF Safety Centre.

Britain is enduring its fifth heatwave of the summer this week. Temperatures are expected to climb as high as 38C in parts of England today.

The safety centre warned of "compromised runway performance" due to heat, which can soften or buckle runway surfaces, increasing the risk of damage to aircraft.

In a report published in October the centre said that "hot and high" conditions could affect the performance of jets, spy planes and transporter aircraft, lengthening take-off distances and reducing the payloads they could carry.

Pilots were warned: "Rising surface temperatures will challenge aircraft performance ... and deteriorate infrastructure such as runways, navigation and control systems."

Erratic weather is putting pressure on operational readiness, the safety officials said, adding: "The new weather reality will demand that aircrew operate in an environment where heightened physical strain, cognitive workload and constant adaption to atmospheric volatility become routine."

Warm air holds more moisture, fuelling stronger thunderstorms, prolonged heatwaves and heavier precipitation, the centre explained. "These evolving conditions are no longer rare exceptions," it said. "They are fast becoming the norm."

The analysis said that "aviation must urgently adapt to a harsher, more volatile atmosphere".

The RAF officials concluded: "With improved planning, vigilance and respect for nature's volatility, we can reduce disruption, prevent emergencies and widen our safety margins. We can't wish the weather away, but we can outfly it, outthink it and outlast it."

W8 MEDIA/SPLASHNEWS; IOANNIS ALEXOPOULOS/LNP

Brown estate **The heat has turned lawns to straw at Cliveden in Taplow, Berkshire, packed swimming pools in High Peak, Derbyshire, and sent ponies fleeing wildfires in the New Forest** Weather, page 55

Historic gardens may cut and run to cooler north

Herbie Russell, Sian Bradley
Eleanor Tait

The Royal Horticultural Society is considering creating "insurance" collections of rare plants in northern England as heatwaves force head gardeners across the country to redesign royal flowerbeds and cull suffering shrubbery.

Concerned by temperatures of 36C at its flagship RHS Garden Wisley in Surrey, the charity plans to duplicate its prized hydrangea collection by taking cuttings and establishing new stocks 200 miles north at RHS Garden Bridgewater in Greater Manchester or 190 miles southwest at RHS Garden Rosemoor in Devon, where rainfall is higher.

Meanwhile, the Royal Parks charity has turned off its ornamental fountains for the longest stretch since 2022 and is redesigning the red flowerbeds outside Buckingham Palace, where scarlet geraniums are failing to cope with the heat.

Historic landscapes are being forced to adapt to the record heat. Kew Gardens has deployed soil moisture sensors to protect rare species and Historic Royal Palaces is replacing traditional bedding at Hampton Court with drought-hardy flora.

Lucy Pitman, a conservation adviser at Plant Heritage, said duplicating entire collections of flowers was "quite a new concept".

"Moving them can be done," she said. "But you'd be better off propagating them, producing new plants from the original ones and distributing them to re-establish them in other places."

At Chiswick House & Gardens, west London, head gardeners are reviewing whether century-old rhododendrons and azaleas should be relocated to shadier spots or removed to conserve water resources. Rosie Fyles, head of gardens, said that the entire vision of a historic English garden had to change, including the "palette of colours".

Instead of lush green lawns, heatwaves are turning landscapes yellow and forcing head gardeners to consider what plants can survive in the hot, dry gardens of the future.

"It's really, really different out there to what they would have imagined it to be in the 17th, 18th or 19th century," Fyles said, adding that the reality of her job had changed in the face of such stark conditions. "I am now thinking of how to keep things alive and not just how to make it look better. It has gotten a lot more serious."

Darren Share, the head of park operations at the Royal Parks, said: "We want to keep that display of red, white and blue right in front of Buckingham Palace, but if you go and look at the beds at the moment, they're not as good as they should be."

It is not all bad news. Ornamental ginger is doing "particularly well" and foxgloves are thriving.

Climate deniers have suddenly gone quiet, Hugo Rifkind, page 27
It's the new norm so better to focus on how to adapt, leading article, page 29

Heatwave forces Boots to stop delivering weight jabs

Eleanor Hayward Health Editor

Boots has had to temporarily pause home delivery of weight-loss injections such as Wegovy and Mounjaro as the jabs cannot be kept cool in vans during the heatwave.

The pharmacy chain said it had made the decision in order to keep the medication safe in transit, with temperatures set to reach 38C in England on Thursday.

Weight-loss injections must be stored in a fridge and kept below 8C as they contain delicate peptide-based proteins that break down or degrade when exposed to heat.

However, Boots found cold chain packaging used in delivery vans could not reliably keep weight-loss injections cool once outdoor temperatures exceeded 30C. It is advising patients to collect their medication from a local Boots shop instead.

It said new packaging was expected to be introduced in the coming weeks, enabling the medication to be sent out at temperatures of up to 35C.

Mandeep Kaur, pharmacist lead for the weight-loss service at Boots Online Doctor, said: "Weight-loss injections are sensitive to temperature. It's important to store them as recommended, since exposure to temperatures outside the recommended range may affect the medicine's quality and effectiveness."

Successive heatwaves in the UK have had a serious impact on health services and contributed to the busiest summer on record for A&E units.

A report by the Royal College of Nursing has warned that the lack of air conditioning in hospitals means nurses are collapsing or suffering seizures as temperatures have exceeded 35C.

Nicola Ranger, chief executive of the Royal College of Nursing, said: "These testimonies should be a wake-up call. When nursing staff are collapsing, feeling dizzy, sick or even being admitted to the very hospitals they work in because their workplaces cannot handle the heat, it shows just how badly they are being failed."

The government's climate change committee has called for all hospitals and care homes to have air conditioning within the next decade.

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER JACK HILL

News feed The two Michelin-starred chef Christian Faulkner, who works on creating menus for the caterers Genuine Dining, prepares lunch for Times journalists

How adviser to Blair inspired Ukraine's drone marketplace

Larisa Brown Defence Editor

It was a lecture on public service reforms under Tony Blair's government nearly two decades ago that gave Ukraine's chief of procurement inspiration for the system that exists in the war-torn country today.

Arsen Zhumadilov was a student at the London School of Economics in 2009 when he heard Professor Sir Julian Le Grand, a former senior policy adviser in No 10, discuss the merits of giving patients and parents greater choice in treatments and education.

In an interview over the phone from Kyiv, shortly after missiles hit the capital, Zhumadilov, 41, said: "Le Grand explained the idea of a 'quasi-market' in public services. Rather than imposing a service on a recipient or provider picked by the government, it can be selected based on convenience, quality and reputation. The government acts as the payer. That idea struck me at the time. It has been with me a long time."

When he was promoted in February last year to become the director of the defence procurement agency in Ukraine, he decided to apply the same principles to the military and, in particular, drone purchases.

By doing so, he transformed the way the country's frontline units bought drones, reducing the time to receive them from nine months to nine days. Now, the UK's Ministry of Defence is interested in what he has to teach them.

Le Grand, an economist by training, said that under such reforms in the UK, parents were given a greater choice of schools, which incentivised them to perform better, while patients for elective surgery got a greater choice of hospitals that were paid by the NHS according to the cost per operation.

Zhumadilov, who studied a master's degree in public management and governance at LSE, found Ukraine's procurement agency to be a top-down, heavily centralised institution. "One of the key problems that I was immediately confronted with was the problem of drone procurement. By the time drones were delivered to the front line, they were becoming obsolete," he said.

Lengthy contracting procedures and approvals meant that it would sometimes take six to nine months after the devices were ordered to reach the front line. Units were also receiving drones unsuited for the environments in which they were fighting.

Zhumadilov, taking Le Grand's ideas with him, decided that soldiers should be able to choose the equipment they wanted from a digital marketplace and order it directly. He came up with DOT-Chain Defence, a weapons marketplace in which the government allocated budgets directly to the brigades, typically made up of several thousand troops.

Budgets are based on the number of battalions within the brigades. They can also receive bonus money based on their successes on the battlefield, measured by the number of Russian kills and damage to enemy equipment.

DOT-Chain Defence founder Arsen Zhumadilov was a student at LSE

In a significant shift, soldiers have much more choice and there is greater competition. The brigades can use their budgets in the marketplace to order the weapons they need for their specific missions.

Manufacturers, meanwhile, compete for drone orders, and the system significantly shortens the time between a unit's request and delivery. Companies are also pushed to develop the technology based on real battlefield demands.

Zhumadilov said: "Manufacturers supply those drones to brigades without delivering to central warehouses.

"It is totally on brigades to select what they like, they have the budgets revealed every month based on a certain formula."

He said that the budget was supplemented with a "motivational budget" based on an "e-points" system. Units can earn e-points for verified battlefield strikes which they can then use to get equipment through DOT-Chain Defence.

The number of e-points a unit gets is based on its monthly effectiveness. E-points are awarded for eliminating enemy personnel, destroying enemy positions with personnel inside, destroying equipment, destroying enemy electronic warfare antennas and many other categories. Wounding a Russian soldier is worth eight e-points, 12 are awarded for a dead one, with four for a destroyed motorcycle. To get more, the units must submit more data about how they completed missions so they can be verified and validated.

Since July last year, DOT-Chain Defence has delivered more than 1.2 million drones, unmanned ground vehicles, warheads for drones and radio electronic warfare devices across Ukraine's front lines. If commanders need weapons faster, they can use the marketplace to see what quantities of drones are available for a quick order.

"They have all the tools to speed up the process to get what they want pretty much immediately," Zhumadilov said.

Munitions or other weapons that fall under the "commodity" bracket are not included, as it made more sense to buy them centrally to lower costs.

Hundreds of brigades now use the system, which users have said has given them the "upper hand over the enemy", according to Zhumadilov. "Drones are still gaining momentum. The extent and scale of how it will all look is yet to be comprehended," he said .

The UK's MoD, notorious for its lengthy procurement process, has a lot to learn. While special forces troops have greater freedom when it comes to buying kit, other units wait as long as 18 months for orders to materialise.

Zhumadilov said he was in "close touch" with the MoD's defence, equipment and support unit, with British officials now more interested in what Ukraine is doing, rather than what wisdom they can offer Kyiv.

Mossad chief: MI5 praised us for foiling plots in UK

Tom Newton Dunn

A former Mossad chief has said an MI5 director-general told him that his service deserved "an Oscar" for thwarting multiple terrorist plots in the UK.

Yossi Cohen's disclosure came as he warned Andy Burnham that his blunt criticism of the Gaza war risked a rift with Israel that could put British Jews at risk. In an interview with The Times, Cohen, director of Israel's foreign intelligence service from 2016 to 2021, claimed that Mossad had "saved many, many lives on British soil" and insisted that the country's new prime minister should remember that.

Cohen told this week's *The General and the Journalist* podcast: "I quote your former director of MI5 who said, 'Yossi, you deserve the Oscar for what you did here. You have disrupted a huge quantity of terror activity inside the UK. Thank you very much for doing it.'

"I think that the UK government should do exactly the same. I think that the UK has to be super supportive to the state of Israel, as we had been to you when you had suffered terrorism on your lands."

Last month Burnham apologised for Labour's response to Israel's actions in Gaza under Sir Keir Starmer and promised his government would "do better". The new Labour leader also backed further sanctions against senior Israeli figures involved in settler violence.

Yossi Cohen was the director of Mossad from 2016 to 2021

Cohen, 64, who was national security adviser to Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister. for three years, said: "Criticism is OK, but opposing what we're doing is not OK. The state of Israel never initiated this war in Gaza. The terrorists did, Hamas and Islamic Jihad did."

In a veiled suggestion that key intelligence co-operation could be curtailed, Cohen explained: "The UK government should understand that we read what they do. And you do have a huge local problem in the UK today. It is not safe to walk on London streets or in Manchester if you're Jewish."

He also defended Mossad's reputation for ruthlessness in its operations.

While its clandestine missions have been highly effective, it has also been accused of carrying out extrajudicial killings and hurting civilians. A recent example was how Mossad penetrated the terror group Hezbollah's supply of pagers and inserted explosives into them. Thousands of its operatives' devices exploded simultaneously across Lebanon and Syria on September 17, 2024, killing dozens of them but also, according to reports, leaving scores of bystanders maimed and wounded.

Cohen, who has published a book about his service entitled *The Sword of Freedom*, said: "This kind of operation creates a very important ethos — not only that we dare, not only that we'll do everything that it takes to protect our country from terrorism and existential future potential threats, but I want everyone to know we are doing it."

Listen to the full interview with Yossi Cohen on The Times's *The General and the Journalist* this week wherever you get your podcasts.

Treasury failed PA who took her life over 'office gossip'

Chloe Moffat, 26, died by suicide the day after a 'vexatious' complaint, **George Odling** and **Matthew Young** write

A personal assistant at the Treasury happy in her job killed herself the day after being made the subject of a "vexatious" complaint, her mother has said.

Anne Moffat said her daughter, Chloe Moffat, 26, had been "happy as Larry" and unaware that her strong performance was about to earn her a bonus in a forthcoming review before the anonymous complaint.

On May 19 last year, Moffat attended a meeting with managers where she was told about an allegation that she had shared sensitive confidential information about colleagues, which she denied. A coroner has found that HM Treasury "materially contributed" to her death by failing to inform her that she was unlikely to lose her job through the disciplinary process.

"She was so happy working there, absolutely happy," Anne Moffat told The Times. "She was ready for a promotion and then there were some allegations made and Chloe denied them.

"[They were made by] anonymous witnesses and, as far as we understand, they were always going to be anonymous, so they could never have given a statement.

"We know what the allegations were about — it was no more than office gossip, I'm sure it was all vexatious, sadly. It wasn't dealt with according to policy, as the coroner said."

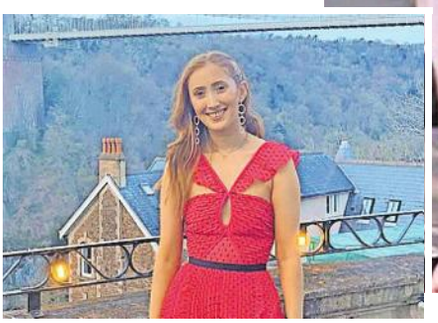
Moffat worked at the Treasury for almost three years. She "loved her job" and had an "exemplary employment record", a three-day inquest at Surrey coroners' court heard.

"She was well thought of and we have emails from directors who she worked for over the three years," her mother said. "They do bonuses in the Treasury at the end-of-year performance review — she'd actually just been awarded one, but she didn't know about it."

On Monday, the assistant coroner, Anna Crawford, recorded a conclusion of suicide and said the government department contributed to Moffat's death by not applying a written disciplinary policy and failing to explain that the strictest penalty was likely to be a written warning, not a dismissal.

In the meeting with two managers, Moffat tearfully asked whether she would lose her job but was told by the more senior manager that she "could not predict the outcome at this stage".

Moffat texted a friend to say she thought she would be fired, then called her mother and it was decided she would go to stay at her parents' home in Godalming, Surrey. She took her own life the next day.



Chloe Moffat, above and left, was at the Treasury for three years

Crawford said that had correct policy been followed, Moffat would have been sent a letter setting out the details and would have been advised of the probable penalty.

She issued a prevention of future deaths notice and said: "I am satisfied that the shock and distress of the allegations and thinking she was going to lose her job contributed to her state of mind."

Moffat's mother said the family was pleased with the coroner's findings.

Nikki Dixon, 67, Moffat's neighbour at her home in Brixton, south London, said: "She didn't talk much about her job but she was always immaculately turned out when she would leave for work and get back in the evenings — you could tell it was something she took very seriously.

"It is just so, so sad. She was someone with everything going for her, with her whole life ahead of her."

The Treasury said: "We continue to mourn Chloe's passing as a colleague and friend. Our thoughts remain with her family and friends. We take the coroner's concerns extremely seriously and recognise it is important to act quickly. We are now considering the findings carefully.

"We have introduced improvements to guidance, support and wellbeing arrangements but recognise we must continue to take action to prevent this happening again."

Contact the Samaritans anonymously on 116 123 or chat.samaritans.org

Teacher on trial over claim of sex with besotted boy

Mark Ludlow

A female teacher at a north London comprehensive school for boys had sex with a "besotted" teenage pupil "20 to 30 times" in the late 1980s, a court has been told.

Sally-Anne Bowen, 64, has also been accused of allowing another student to touch her breasts and kiss her during lunch at a café near the school between 1986 and 1988, a jury at Harrow crown court heard.

Bowen, of Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, faces six charges of indecent assault against the first boy and two against the second when both were aged between 14 and 15 years old.

Bowen, who was 25 at the time of the alleged offences, denied the charges.

Madeleine Wolfe, for the prosecution, said Bowen did not force herself on either of the students, who appeared willing to engage in flirty behaviour and sexual activity, but it was a clear breach of trust from the chemistry teacher.

"By flirting with them and engaging in sexual activity with them she exploited her position for her own sexual gratification," Wolfe said. "As these boys were exploited in that way, any apparent agreement on their part was not genuine consent to the sexual activity.

"It's not whether the boys appear flattered or besotted at the time, it's whether Ms Bowen crossed the boundaries which exist to protect them."

Bowen became friendly with both boys even though neither of them was in her classes. The first pupil, who is now in his fifties, said extra attention from Bowen made him "feel special" and admitted he was attracted to her. He first disclosed the alleged abuse to the woman who is now his wife and she told him to go to the police, which he did in 2014.

When Bowen was interviewed by police, she said he had been "besotted" with her and followed her around but denied any inappropriate behaviour, describing it as "pure fantasy". She was interviewed again in 2024 when she also denied the claims.

As a result of the claims, Bowen faced a Teaching Regulation Authority hearing in 2022. The second pupil read of the hearing and came forward after encouragement from his wife and family.

During interviews, Bowen told police she could not remember him.

The trial continues.

Woman dies at dance music festival

Seren Hughes

A woman died after being found unconscious inside a tent at a music festival in the grounds of a stately home in Norfolk.

Houghton Festival is a dance music festival held in the grounds of Houghton Hall where the music continues non-stop throughout the weekend. In 2023, the Princess of Wales attended the festival, which is less than five miles away from Anmer Hall, the Prince and Princess of Wales's country home on the Sandringham estate.

Norfolk police said that a woman, who was not named, died after being found unconscious inside a tent at 8.11pm on Sunday, the final day of the festival. Emergency services attended but she died at the scene.

The death is being treated by police as "unexplained" but is not believed to be suspicious.

In a statement, Houghton Festival said: "We are deeply saddened to confirm that a person has passed away at Houghton 2026. Our thoughts are entirely with their family and loved ones at this difficult time.

"We are grateful to our on-site medical team, event response team and to Norfolk constabulary, who all responded immediately.

"We continue to work closely with the relevant authorities to support in any way we can with their investigations."

The festival took place on August 6-9 and was attended by about 10,000 people. It was founded in 2017 by Craig Richards, a long-running resident DJ and Saturday night musical director at the London nightclub Fabric.

Houghton Festival is set in the woods in the grounds of the home of the Marquess of Cholmondeley, David, and his wife, Rose Hanbury.

The Princess of Wales is said to have briefly attended the festival, accompanied by security guards and friends, after having dinner at Houghton Hall in 2023.

A spokesperson for Norfolk police said: "We were called to Houghton Festival at 8.11pm on Sunday, August 9, following concerns for the safety of a woman found unconscious inside a tent.

"Officers attended with the on-site medical team, but despite efforts she was pronounced dead at the scene. Her next of kin have been informed.

"The death is currently being treated as unexplained but is not believed to be suspicious. Our inquiries are ongoing."

Man, 102, in critical state after 'assault' at Welsh pub

Seren Hughes

A 102-year-old man is in a critical condition after allegedly being assaulted in a pub in south Wales.

Gwent police were called to a report of an assault at the Crow's Nest pub in Cwmbran at about 10.25pm on Saturday, August 1. Officers and paramedics attended, and the man was taken to hospital for treatment. He remains in a critical condition, according to police.

A 56-year-old man from Llanelli was arrested on suspicion of assault and later released under investigation.

Casey Smith, manager of the Llanyrafon Social Club, said the 102-year-old man visited often. She said: "He's been a regular in here for ages, we did his 100th birthday party. Obviously, we hope he's on the mend — 102 isn't exactly the best age to be [hurt]."

Police have appealed for witnesses, saying they wanted to speak to anyone who was at the pub between 10pm and 11pm on August 1.

The Crow's Nest said: "If anyone was in the pub that night and witnessed this please get in contact with the police."

Gwent police said: "A 56-year-old man from Llanelli was arrested on suspicion of section 20 assault and has since been released under investigation."

Anyone with information can contact the police by calling 101, quoting log reference 2600249432, or contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111 or through its website.

News

TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER RICHARD POHLE

Royal flush A recreation of a village shop at the Rural Life Living Museum in Tilford, Surrey, displays merchandise celebrating Queen Elizabeth II's 1953 coronation

Overseas students get clearing edge

Georgia Lambert

International students are offered far more choice than British applicants at some of the country's leading universities through clearing, a Times analysis has found.

Applicants use clearing to find a university place if they have not met their offer. Many UK universities offer a broader selection of undergraduate places through clearing to international applicants than to domestic candidates, driven largely by tuition fees and government enrolment caps on British students. Overseas students can pay substantially higher fees than domestic undergraduates.

There were 24,719 undergraduate courses available through clearing at Russell Group universities yesterday. Students from England could choose from 3,483 courses, compared with 3,296 each for Scottish and Welsh students, 3,291 for those from Northern Ireland and 3,572 for those from the Republic of Ireland. The choice was wider for overseas applicants, offering 3,887 courses to European students and 3,894 to those from outside the EU.

Jo Saxton, chief executive of Ucas, recently predicted record numbers both accepting a place through clearing and applying directly to clearing.

Squatter envoy: I'm sticking it to junta

David Brown
Chief News Correspondent

For the past five years Myanmar's former ambassador to the UK has refused to leave his official residence as he believes his nation's government is "illegitimate" since a military coup.

Kyaw Zwar Minn appeared in the dock at Westminster magistrates' court yesterday at the start of his trial for alleged criminal trespass of a diplomatic mission. He continues to live with his family at the mansion in Hampstead, north London, despite being sacked by the military junta in 2021.

After his dismissal, Kyaw Zwar Minn wrote to the then Prince of Wales, now King, and received a response from Charles's principal private secretary, who "offered his support for his position", the court was told.

The former ambassador was also supported by Nigel Adams, then a Tory Foreign Office minister, after calling for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's Oxford-educated civilian leader, the court was told.

Kyaw Zwar Minn was then told by Adams that he must leave the official residence within 31 days and that his diplomatic immunity was being revoked. Adams offered the diplomat £30,000 and the assistance of the police, the court heard. The 68-year-old has since been granted refugee status on the basis of a "well-founded fear of persecution".

Kyaw Zwar Minn was in court for alleged trespass of Myanmar's diplomatic mission

The UK does not officially recognise Myanmar's military junta and has imposed sanctions on senior military officers and some businesses.

David Perry KC, for the defence, said: "Mr Minn's case is the government of Myanmar is illegitimate and the military authorities could not lawfully terminate his appointment ... and nor could they legitimately use the property."

The former colonel in the Myanmar army was previously the ambassador to the United Nations. He moved to London in 2013 and his position also covered Ireland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden until he was locked out of the embassy in Mayfair.

Louise Oakley KC, for the prosecution, said when Kyaw Zwar Minn was recalled in April 2021 he was sent a letter instructing him to leave diplomatic premises, including the official residence, which is known as Myanmar House. "This defendant may not recognise the outcome of the coup ... That, we submit, is irrelevant," she added.

Win Zeyar Tun, Myanmar's chargé d'affaires, 49, is its highest ranking diplomat in London. He is not able to present his credentials to the King as an ambassador because the UK does not recognise the military regime.

He told the court that Kyaw Zwar Minn was sacked as ambassador because he broke civil service rules by issuing a statement without the approval of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The trial was adjourned until September 25.

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Arday case was an aberration, says Cambridge vice-chancellor

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

The vice-chancellor of Cambridge University has called Jason Arday's appointment an "aberration" and announced a review of senior academic appointments in light of the plagiarism row over his work.

In a letter to staff, Deborah Prentice said the row over Arday's appointment should not cast aspersions on other academics from ethnic minorities. Arday was the university's youngest black professor when he was hired in 2023.

The Faculty of Education will be investigated as part of the process. Arday resigned last Wednesday and the university has already begun an investigation into his academic qualifications and honorary appointments, after allegations that he plagiarised parts of his PhD thesis and other research.

Arday claimed to have been non-verbal until age 11 and only learnt to read and write at 18. He denies the plagiarism allegations.

Hilary Cremin, the outgoing head of Cambridge's Faculty of Education, had welcomed Arday as a unanimous appointment by the board of electors, saying: "We are so lucky to have you."

Cambridge defended Arday when the plagiarism allegations were first reported in July. A spokesperson said the claims were unfounded and part of "a vile campaign to undermine his credibility". The university said on July 24 that it had investigated the claims and found no wrongdoing.

Prentice admitted the case was "difficult and damaging" and had led to anger and anxiety. Other universities will help lead the latest investigation into how Arday was appointed.

"I know there is anger and anxiety around this damaging and difficult case," Prentice said yesterday. "We will now investigate the circumstances around his appointment by the Faculty of Education back in 2022 and his time here in Cambridge since his appointment nearly four years ago."

Prentice said the investigation would be thorough, transparent and carried out independently by senior academics from "within and beyond Cambridge". She added that the "work must begin as soon as possible" and it would then inform a review of the process for appointing senior academic roles.

Prentice's letter added: "Appointments to senior academic roles, as in the case of the Faculty of Education and Jason Arday, are currently led at department level. I note that Durham and Glasgow universities have announced that they are also investigating the circumstances surrounding the appointment of Jason Arday ... and that Jesus College has accepted his resignation from his fellowship.

"In addition, the university's research policy committee will review the misconduct in research policy ... We need to understand if there is more we could do when serious allegations are raised in relation to our own academic standards at Cambridge."

Prentice added: "I want to be very clear that we do not need the outcomes of an investigation to clearly and loudly affirm that our staff of colour are highly valued, for their scholarship, their achievements, and the contributions they make to the institution and the wider academic community.

"This particular case is an aberration and should not be used to cast aspersions on their work or the legitimacy of their roles at Cambridge."

She suggested the review would not be swift, saying: "We need to allow these reviews to complete their work effectively so we can learn from any mistakes and, where needed, improve our processes."

Prentice's response was insufficient for one critical Cambridge academic, who said staff faced a "firestorm" that the vice-chancellor had not dealt with.

Nicholas Guyatt, a professor of North American history and fellow at Jesus College, said the Prentice letter was a "step forward" but questioned why she had yet to "speak publicly in defence" of Cambridge's wider staff. Guyatt co-organised a letter sent to the vice-chancellor by 90 senior academics last week that criticised its handling of the situation.

Speaking in a personal capacity, Guyatt said if Prentice had spoken publicly earlier it might have quelled the intense media coverage of recent weeks. Guyatt said he was reassured by the parameters for the investigation and said it needed to be run independently. He suggested that one or two of the letter's signatories should be involved. "It absolutely has to proceed without fear or favour," he said.

Durham University said it had looked into the appointment of Arday to a junior academic role in 2019, adding: "He was appointed following a standard, competitive recruitment process in which he met published criteria for the role. He left Durham over four years ago and no longer has any formal association with us. Allegations about plagiarism in his PhD did not surface until after he had left Durham."

Daniel Sokol, a barrister in higher education law, said the row over Arday's academic abilities should prompt universities to "ask hard questions", including about how examiners were selected and paid, and how allegations of academic misconduct were investigated.

Arday was awarded his PhD by Liverpool John Moores University in 2015 for a 401-page thesis on peer mentoring among student teachers. Liverpool John Moores previously investigated the allegations and did not uphold a finding of plagiarism, attributing the issues to "honest and reasonable error".

Sokol, who has represented students challenging failed PhD examinations for 15 years, claims the PhD process is "flawed" and "that poor theses can pass, and good ones fail". He added that investigating allegations took too long and professional links between examiners and supervisors could influence who assessed a thesis. There is no suggestion these issues affected Arday.

Change of heart

July 24 The Times reports on claims of plagiarism against Arday. Cambridge calls the allegations "vile". Several academics, including the head of a Cambridge college, back Arday.

July 31 Arday gives his first interview to The Times since the allegations broke, denying plagiarism but admitting he had made mistakes. Cambridge says it takes allegations of academic misconduct "incredibly seriously", adding that complainants should contact the universities where the alleged plagiarism took place.

August 3 The head of Wolfson College, Cambridge, withdraws her support.

August 4 The Times contacts Cambridge and Arday over further alleged academic misconduct.

August 5 Cambridge begins an investigation and declines to comment further until the process ends. Jesus College, where Arday was a fellow, also starts investigation. Cambridge and Jesus ask for Arday to be treated with respect. Arday resigns but continues to deny wrongdoing.

August 7 Cambridge academics demand an independent inquiry into Arday's appointment.

August 12 Cambridge vice-chancellor announces review of appointment of senior academics, as well as inquiry into education faculty where Arday worked.

Deborah Prentice has vowed to hold an independent investigation into the Arday appointment

JOONEY WOODWARD FOR THE TIMES

Jason Arday during his PhD ceremony in 2016 at Liverpool John Moores University

Schoolmates question 'non-verbal child' claims

Questions have been raised over Jason Arday's story that he was non-verbal during his early childhood and only learnt to speak at age 11, after his resignation from the University of Cambridge (Emma Yeomans writes).

Two childhood friends of Arday's have claimed that they remembered him "chatting" and "cracking jokes" as a child.

However, another two classmates and a parent said that he was non-verbal and needed significant help.

At the time of his appointment, Arday, who resigned after allegations of plagiarism and academic misconduct, described his rise from a severely autistic, non-verbal child in a council estate in Clapham, south London, to a professor at Cambridge.

His memoir *Great and Unfortunate Things* recounts his early life, learning to speak and finally learning to read and write aged 18.

However, Jonathan Stewart, who said he was in the year below him at Heathbrook primary school, told The Guardian that Arday was the class clown, saying: "He was always cracking jokes. He was the comedian guy, he would even put on voices."

Arday, a talented goalkeeper who still plays in the Sunday league team Battersea Park Rangers, would bring his own gloves to school and even dive on the concrete playground.

When they were picked up by minibus for Sunday school, Stewart claimed Arday would entertain his peers by singing an advertising jingle.

Another schoolmate, who was also in the year below Arday, said: "I don't remember too much about him but I certainly recollect him being able to speak."

However, two other friends who are still in touch with Arday, said that his account was true and recalled a silent and challenged primary school child, who was frequently taken out of class for additional support.

In his memoir, Arday said that he had extensive speech therapy as a child but this was almost dropped as he had made so little progress. He wrote: "Miraculously, just a few days shy of my 12th birthday, I spoke."

In a statement provided to The Times, one friend wrote: "He was regularly taken out of class for his educational needs.

"His severe special needs didn't stop him playing football and games with me and others as he was still friendly and could communicate through play and actions."

Nick Clarke, who also plays football with him as an adult, said Arday was non-verbal, in a statement provided to The Guardian via Arday.

Clarke's mother, Caroline Russell-Clarke, who also knew Arday and helped him at nursery, said he had "serious learning difficulties".

News

Green JCB hits enviable 406mph

A retired Royal Air Force pilot has set a new land speed record in a hydrogen-powered vehicle, nearly 20 years after becoming the first person to break the sound barrier on land (Laurence Sleator writes).

Wing Commander Andy Green, 64, achieved 406 miles per hour at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah. The previous record of 303mph was set in 2009 by Buckeye Bullet 2, a student-built vehicle from the Ohio State University.

Green was driving a twin-engine, 32 foot JCB Hydromax with a combined 1,600 brake horsepower. It recorded an average speed of 406.32mph across two runs at Bonneville.

Green holds multiple land speed records. He is still the only person to break the sound barrier on land after driving a jet-powered vehicle across the Black Rock Desert in Nevada at 763mph in 1997. He set a land speed record in 2006 for a diesel vehicle at Bonneville in the JCB Dieselmax, at over 350mph.

The team celebrates at the Bonneville Salt Flats in Utah after the record run by Andy Green, left

Reacting to his latest record, Green said: "The car was terrific — stable, strong and fast ... This record is a huge achievement by a world-class team and superb technology."

Hydrogen combustion engines are generally considered to be emission-free as no carbon dioxide is released and the main by-product is water vapour, although burning the gas does also release trace amounts of nitrogen oxides. On its record run, JCB Hydromax — which has tyres that grow at high speed — was expected to consume just over 2kg of hydrogen and produce 18 litres of water.

Lord Bamford, the chairman of JCB, said: "Twenty years ago we came to Bonneville with JCB Dieselmax and showed what British engineering could do with diesel power. [Now] we have done it again — this time with engines powered by hydrogen.

"This record was set by production-based engines, the same engines powering JCB diggers right now. That is the point of JCB Hydromax: it shows hydrogen works, and it works today at the highest level with zero emissions."

Ryan Ballard, the engineering director of JCB who has led the project, said: "This record belongs to the engineering team which took a hydrogen digger engine and made it the fastest of its kind on earth. This has been an amazing challenge from the outset of it being set in February last year. We came here fully prepared, and the car delivered."

Government turns a deaf ear to protests against flight noise

Bill Curtis

Thousands of households under flight paths face more noise pollution after ministers agreed to weaken sound protections in a bid to reduce flight times and subsequent carbon emissions.

Under new statutory guidance the government will prioritise fuel efficiency and shorter routes over limiting aircraft noise from an altitude of 5,000ft, down from the present threshold of 7,000ft. It means shorter routes will be favoured over longer but quieter ones.

Nearly 10,000 households near big airports could be affected, including 6,200 homes around Heathrow, 1,600 around Manchester, 1,500 around Edinburgh and 400 around Gatwick.

The reform, which is subject to consultation, addresses longstanding complaints from pilots over outdated flight paths. Britain's airspace corridors were largely mapped in the 1950s, when the country handled 200,000 flights a year, compared with 2.5 million last year.

Under current controls, a flight from Spain to Luton is frequently routed as far north as Cambridge before turning south to land. Transatlantic arrivals into Heathrow are regularly held in stack patterns east of London.

Documents signed off by Keir Mather, the aviation minister, admit "some communities could experience increased aviation noise" under the updated air navigation guidance issued to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

The document said: "[These changes] may lead to airspace designs that prioritise efficiency or emissions reductions over noise mitigation in certain altitude bands ... As a result, some communities could experience increased aviation noise, particularly if flight paths are adjusted to optimise fuel-burn or capacity."

Modelling by the CAA shows that reducing the threshold to 5,000ft cuts the number of households protected around big airports by relatively small margins — dropping by 2 per cent at Heathrow and 6 per cent at Gatwick.

However, government analysis warns that lowering the threshold further to 4,000ft would leave more than 38,000 households around Heathrow and over half the affected population in Edinburgh excluded from official noise protections.

Lowering the noise priority threshold to 5,000ft will save airlines roughly £6 million a year in fuel costs by letting planes fly more direct routes. It is expected to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 37,000 tonnes annually.

Official estimates acknowledge that per-flight fuel gains will be marginal, as aircraft will spend a few minutes climbing through the newly affected 5,000ft to 7,000ft band, but ministers maintain that cumulative efficiency savings will deliver long-term benefits.

A Department for Transport source said that "increased noise for one community will likely mean reduced noise for another", adding that impact variation across local areas was inevitable. They also said less noise would be produced by planes circulating airports thanks to quicker landing and take-off.

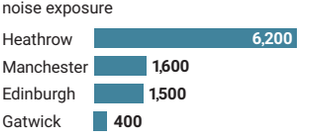
Sally Pavey, of the Communities Against Gatwick Noise Emissions campaign group, said: "Studies have shown the lower the aircraft, the greater the noise. We have already fought to get aircraft up to 7,000ft, and wanting to lower it shows a blatant disregard for those already impacted."

Paul Beckford, policy director at the Heathrow Association for the Control of Aircraft Noise, said: "The government is weakening protection for people living under flight paths. This is particularly concerning given the extra 276,000 flights a year the proposed Heathrow expansion would bring."

A Department for Transport spokesman said: "Our new guidance ... will create smoother and more direct routes into airports. Any changes will be subject to robust consultation."

Volume up

Nearly 10,000 households around major airports would no longer be included in the government's priority to limit aircraft noise exposure



Redacted register is a 'gift to spies'

Oliver Wright Policy Editor

A decision to hide the names of 2,000 people employed by MPs in Westminster will make it easier for hostile states to spy on the House of Commons, senior parliamentarians have warned.

The Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (Ipac) said that serious allegations of "Chinese espionage" had been exposed through the Register of Interests of MPs' staff. Yet from this month the register was redacted to remove the names of all staff working for MPs, after a decision by the Commons standards committee.

Luke de Pulford, executive director of Ipac, said: "Parliamentary staff have long been a soft underbelly for authoritarian states. Removing staff names is a gift to those who mean to spy on and subvert the very heart of our democratic way of life."

The committee said: "We accept that this represents a change in the transparency provided by the current register, but we consider it a proportionate one in light of the safety concerns raised with us."

A right to know, Thunderer, page 26

TMS

diary@thetimes.co.uk | @timesdiary

Reform's posh new neighbour

The convicted fraudster George Cottrell's relationship with Reform UK is now closer, at least in a geographical sense. After news broke that his offices are now in the same building as Reform's at Millbank Tower, the party still insisted that it and "Posh George" are the political equivalent of just good friends. However, while Cottrell is merely described as a party volunteer, he has been seen having a phone call with the party's Treasury spokesman, Robert Jenrick, so he does seem to be at least a deeply interested volunteer. It's not a comparison either will like, but Cottrell is reminiscent of Jeremy Corbyn. So far as Reform UK is concerned, we are supposed to believe he is present but not involved.

The prime minister is already having an impact on the nation's high streets. On Tuesday Andy Burnham was asked for his favourite Greggs order by LBC and, after he said the "sausage, bean and cheese thing", the bakers soon saw that their sausage, bean and cheese melt was flying off the shelves. "Sales have gone through the roof," a Greggs spokesman said. "Cheers, Andy." The bakers have now rechristened it à la Burnham's description. So the PM can claim an impact on growth, albeit of people's waistlines.

MEL'S GOODIE 2:2

Good luck to all A-level students as they receive their results today and please know that it will be all right in the end. Take the comedian Mel Giedroyc, who was immensely stressed when waiting for her university exam results because she had done no work and had ended up writing "25 pages of absolute guff" about the Goodies and Monty Python. The Cambridge dons who were marking her paper must have been bemused as her degree was in French and Italian. She tells the *How to Fail* podcast that she had even painted on a black eye and contemplated causing "a minor breakage on my writing hand so that I couldn't do the exam". Despite all this, she got a 2:2. That result is all the more impressive because, as we are now well aware, Cambridge had much higher standards back then.

The city of Wrexham has received a significant tourism boost as a result of the Hollywood actor Ryan Reynolds, left, buying the local football team and then making a TV show about it. Now a Texas couple have gone the extra mile and have moved to north Wales as a result of the coverage. Reynolds greeted the news in his characteristically deadpan style. After seeing the headline "Couple to move from Texas to Wrexham after watching series", he remarked: "Thank God they didn't watch Chernobyl."

DIVINE DEFERENCE

As she was laid to rest, more stories about the ex-Tory MP Ann Widdecombe were shared. One concerned her time as a minister at the Department for Employment, where she insisted that her civil servants call her Ann. Lord Henley, a junior minister, objected to this dropping of deference, but Widdecombe said: "I don't understand, Oliver. I mean, God calls me Ann." The junior replied: "Really? God calls me Lord Henley."

JACK BLACKBURN

Man shot dead in Clapham is named

Jessica Sharkey Crime Correspondent

An off-duty bus driver aged 25 who was shot dead near a south London pub has been named by police.

Auguste-Marie Bile-aka Amoa, known as Billy, died at the scene after emergency services were called to reports of gunfire in Willington Road, Clapham, on Monday night.

A suspect aged 22, who was arrested on suspicion of murder shortly afterwards, remains in hospital under police guard, the Metropolitan Police said.

Neighbours described Amoa as a "calm, polite and respectful man". A friend said he was in the "wrong place [at the] wrong time".

Sansha Fritz, 35, told The Times on Tuesday that Amoa had been about to take his girlfriend home when the incident took place.

Fritz, who lives in Willington Road, said: "I've never even seen him shout, get out of character, hang around no one. He's just a good person. He's always smiling. He's got a beautiful smile."

She said she went to the scene after hearing gunshots and saw Amoa's girlfriend, who told her a man approached them before "shots were fired".

Another neighbour, who did not want to be named, said Amoa had been working as a bus driver for more than a year. He said: "He wasn't a gang member; he was just civil. He was just working a normal job, looking after the family."

The neighbour said Amoa's mother and sister were on the scene immediately afterwards and his mother shouted: "That's my son! That's my son!"

Police released this photograph of Auguste-Marie Bile-aka Amoa, 25

A close friend of Amoa who lives nearby and did not want to be named said: "He was just a good soul."

Flowers and a candle were laid at the scene by the Landor pub.

Detective Chief Inspector Claire Guiver, who is leading the investigation, said her thoughts were with the victim's family "as they come to terms with this tragic incident".

She added: "We continue to appeal for anyone with information to come forward. If you were in the area at the time of the shooting, witnessed anything suspicious or have any CCTV, dashcam or doorbell footage that could assist our investigation, we urge you to get in touch."

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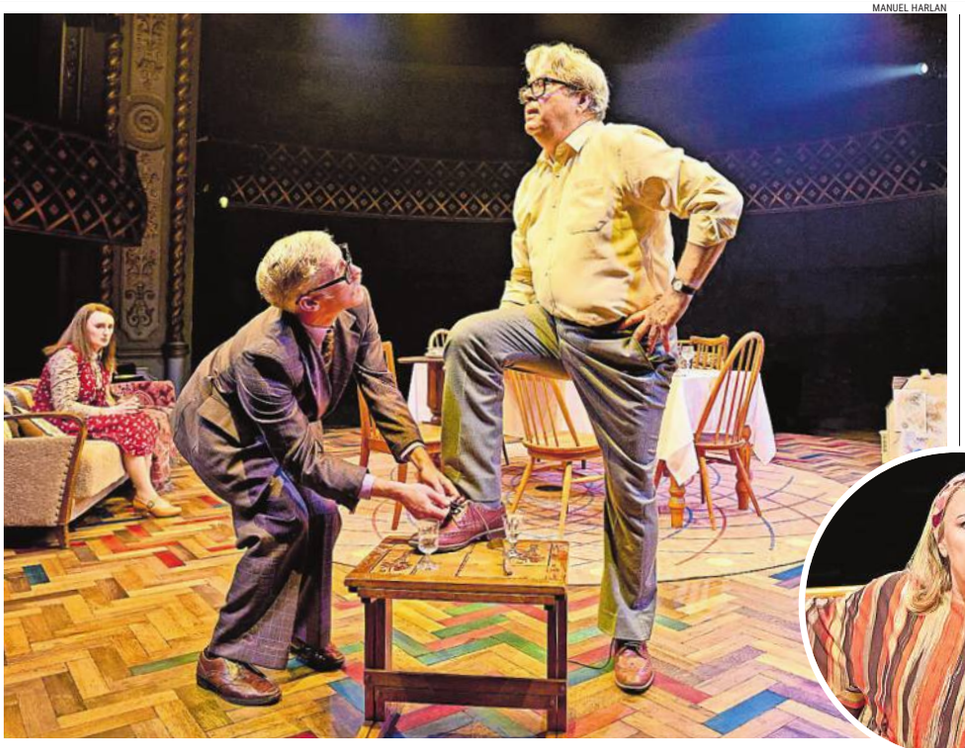
Ayckbourn's jape raised by Allam's comic masterclass

Theatre Clive Davis

How the Other Half Loves
Old Vic, London (160min)
★★★★☆

MANUEL HARLAN



Laura Elsworthy and Adam Gillen, far left, bring ferocious precision but it is Roger Allam and Dorothy Atkinson, below, who steal the show

Whether he's simply putting on his raincoat or making an entrance in his underpants, you can't take your eyes off Roger Allam. If there are moments when the Old Vic's revival of *How the Other Half Loves* grinds through the gears — some characters are closer to props than real people — Allam delivers a masterclass in comic timing. Every pause, every hesitation, every bumbled phrase is a delight.

Like that Seventies classic *Abigail's Party* — which returned to the London stage this week — Alan Ayckbourn's 1969 marital comedy builds humour out of excruciatingly awkward set pieces. At its heart is an extraordinarily clever sleight of hand in which we eavesdrop on two dinner parties simultaneously. The conceit is as ingenious as the behind-the-scenes version of a farce in Michael Frayn's *Noises Off*.

In Phillip Breen's in-the-round revival, Allam plays patrician business executive Frank Foster, who is blissfully unaware that his wife, Fiona (imagine if *The Good Life*'s Margo had an itch to scratch), is having an affair with one of his young employees, Bob Phillips, a Jack-the-lad trapped in a tempestuous marriage. When the lovers concoct alibis involving another of Frank's staff, dreary beancounter William Featherstone and his ultra-timid wife, Mary, they inadvertently draw the net tighter around themselves.

Ayckbourn piles up the misunderstandings on a set that represents the overlapping homes of the Fosters and the Phillipses. The two couples flit in and out, oblivious of each other. Breen keeps the physical humour sparking along, just as he did in his hyperactive, open-air version of *The Comedy of Errors* at the RSC. Telephones occupy a central role in the plot. Younger audience members will no doubt be baffled by the reference to something called the speaking clock.

It's with the arrival of the Featherstones — played with ferocious precision by Adam Gillen and Laura Elsworthy — that the mechanism of the plot begins to make distracting noises. This psychotically repressed husband and wife are little more than cartoons. Ayckbourn's portrayal of the Phillipses is brisk too: Rowan Polonski's Bob seems to have little more to him than a taste for boozing, while you can't believe that Ayesha Antoine's harassed new mum, Teresa, would be quite so obsessed with the letters page of The Guardian.

None of that matters, though, as long as the bespectacled Allam stands before us, chuntering on like the underachieving twin brother of Kingsley Amis. He may be pompous and long-winded, yet we feel for this cuckold. Dorothy Atkinson's Fiona wins our sympathy too. She speaks crisply and efficiently, yet those silent looks and long-suffering glances tell us much, much more.

Until September 19; oldvictheatre.com

Next James Bond won't need quantum of social media fame

Alex Farber Media Correspondent
James Desborough

Speculation has swirled for years about the next actor to play James Bond, but whoever wears the famous dinner jacket will not need to be the man with the golden 'gram.

The agent casting the next 007 has said a huge social media profile will not be a consideration.

Amazon MGM Studio chiefs and Denis Villeneuve, the director, are holding auditions for the new British spy in the next few weeks, having promised last week to have chosen their "stirring" candidate by the end of the year.

The search is under way against a growing drive from studio bosses to hire stars with huge online fanbases.

In the past few years movie-makers have shifted towards selecting actors with large numbers of online followers, such as Dwayne Johnson, adopting the view that they can help to draw in bigger cinema audiences.

But Nina Gold, the casting agent tasked with selecting the leading actor for Amazon MGM's Bond revamp has no interest in modern trends.

Gold, 62, whose credits include *Conclave*, *Hamnet* and Netflix's *The Crown*, dismissed the suggestion there was "social media pressure" from Amazon over hiring on key roles.

"Not with me. I don't know about that stuff. I can't even find it on my phone," she said. "People do talk about it, but it's normally the agents more than the people making [the film]."

Gold admitted staff in her casting company scoured TikTok and Instagram to find actors, but she preferred proven methods. "I definitely tend to find people through more traditional methods and go to a lot of drama schools and theatre," she said. "I can't really tell on TikTok what's what."

The frontrunners to succeed Daniel Craig as the super spy have hugely varying follower counts.

Louis Partridge, the *House of Guinness* actor, has 8.6 million Instagram followers, *Bullet Train*'s Aaron Taylor-Johnson has nearly two million and Harris Dickinson, of *The King's Man*, has 772,000.

Callum Turner, star of Apple TV's *Masters of the Air*, has no online profile and neither does Jacob Elordi — the *Wuthering Heights* star deactivated his accounts in 2024.

"I have no relationship with social media," Elordi told CBS in February. "My dream was to be an actor ... I've been given exactly what I wanted. So for me, that's about all I can handle."

Gold said several agents had pitched American actors for the role, even though Bond is expected to be portrayed by an Englishman. "The world has definitely got a lot smaller so everybody's pitching everyone all over the place," she said.

Insiders say Amazon MGM Studios plans to begin filming in spring 2027, but the film is unlikely to hit cinemas until 2028. The last Bond film, *No Time to Die*, was released in 2021.

The six-year break would match or possibly exceed the longest gap yet between James Bond films in its six-decade history, depending on when in 2028 the film is released.

Despite the apparent lack of interest from bosses in the social media profile of the next Bond, the official 007 account still posts updates. Its latest update, captioned "007: holiday itinerary", shows a montage of Bond scenes shot in exotic locations featuring Sean Connery, Roger Moore and Pierce Brosnan and Bond girls such as Britt Ekland and Halle Berry over George Martin's funky *Fillet of Soul* from the *Live and Let Die* soundtrack.

Rod Stewart cancels tour after heart operation

Herbie Russell

Sir Rod Stewart has cancelled the remainder of his 2026 US tour after undergoing heart surgery.

The singer, 81, will take four weeks off to recover, cutting short his US and Mexico itinerary, his representatives said. Stewart was "doing very well" after the coronary stent procedure and he had "returned to his normal daily activities", they added.

Performances of his One Last Time tour were due to stretch into next month but Stewart had recently pulled out of two gigs in the space of a week.

Stewart wrote on Instagram: "I'm already feeling better and very much on the mend." He said he was deeply disappointed to miss the shows and sorry to let his fans down. The father of eight was scheduled to perform at venues in Iowa, Illinois and Mexico, and a six-night run at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas.

A statement by his representatives said: "On the advice of his doctors, [Stewart] will take the next four weeks to recuperate and regain full fitness before returning to the stage. Unfortunately, this means he will be unable to continue his current tour dates."

Rod Stewart almost fainted during a recent performance

The announcement came after Stewart postponed shows in Cincinnati and Cleveland after medical concerns. In May he cancelled gigs in Nevada because of a sinus infection, and in June he pulled out of a concert in San Diego, citing laryngitis. A week later, he almost fainted during a show in Utah.

Ladies first? Not any more on Bumble

Mark Ludlow

Bumble is to scrap its women-first messaging rule — a defining feature of the dating app since its launch in 2014.

The firm had said ensuring women made the first move was empowering and "helps dynamics start on an equal footing, and hopefully leads to kinder, more respectful connections".

Yet Whitney Wolfe Herd, Bumble's chief executive, has announced it will abolish the rule that women, not men, must initiate conversations, and will extend the time that users have to reply from 24 hours to 72 hours.

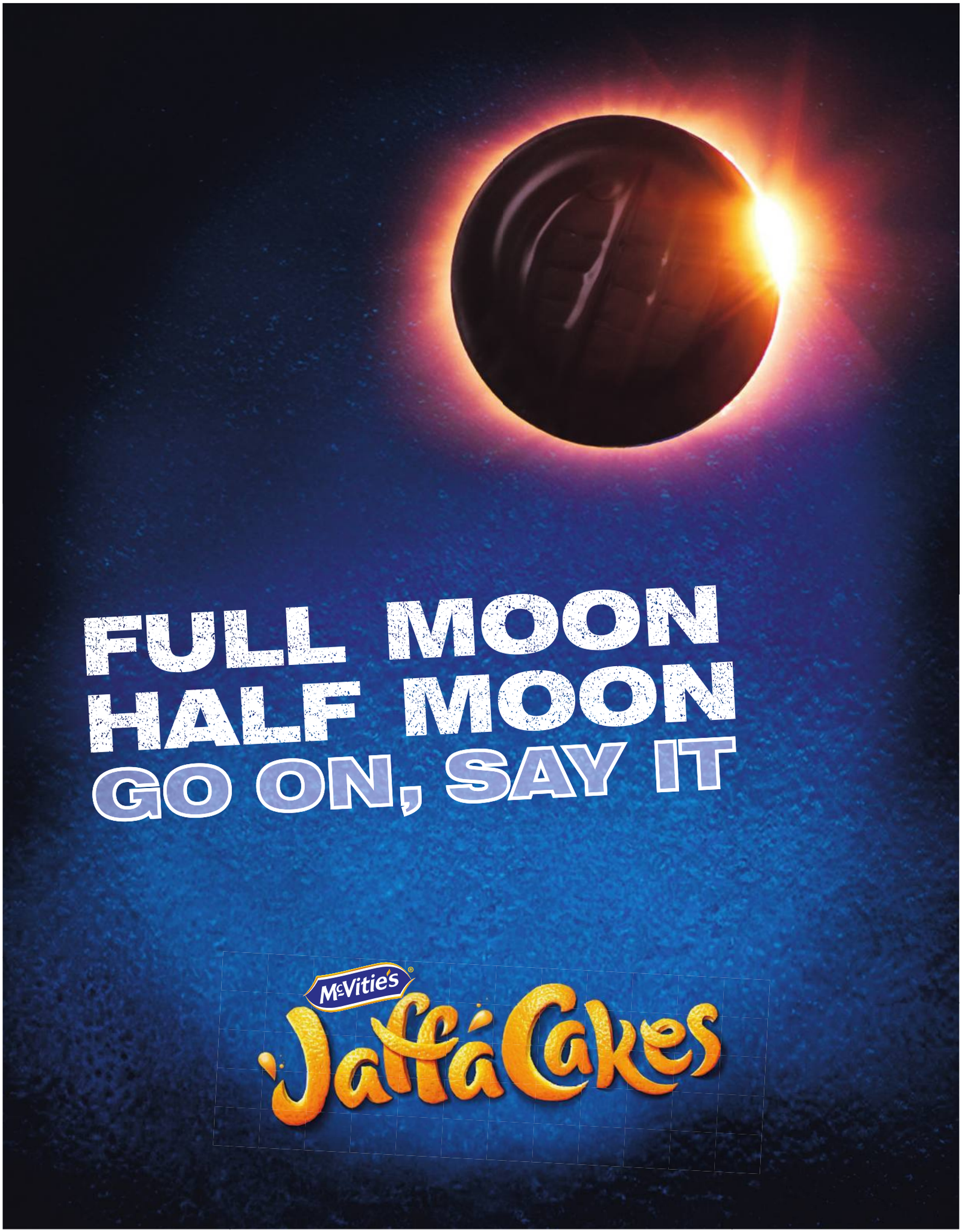
She said this was a response to user demands for "more flexibility, less pressure and more opportunities to create real, meaningful connections".

Wolfe Herd said: "While women making the first move was a radical idea, being women-first was never about prescribing just one way to connect. This evolution isn't a departure from our founding vision, but the realisation of it."

Bumble said nearly two thirds of women it surveyed preferred men to send the first message, saying this would make dating "feel less pressured". But the proposed changes will make it virtually identical to Tinder, and could alienate loyal customers.

Cassandra Fleming, a dating coach, said some women were looking for men to make more effort. "Bumble opening this up could actually surface more of these men, rather than rewarding passivity," she told Inc.com.

Dating apps around the world are grappling with a trend for singletons to return to traditional, in-person methods of meeting.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Cocoa nut crafts rare homegrown bar of chocolate

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Britain may not have the tropical climate of Ghana, Brazil or the Ivory Coast, but that has not stopped Berkshire from producing what is being claimed as the country's first homegrown chocolate for almost a century.

The bar made to celebrate the centenary of the University of Reading uses local cocoa, along with British milk and sugar, meaning its ingredients travelled rather fewer food miles than the average offering from Cadbury.

It is believed to be the first chocolate produced from British-grown cocoa since one made by Rowntree's in York in 1933. It was presented to the six-year-old daughter of the Duke of York, who went on to become Queen Elizabeth II.

The cocoa for the new bar came not from an unlikely plantation in the Thames Valley but rather the university's International Cocoa Quarantine Centre, where hundreds of varieties are kept in climate-controlled glasshouses.

The centre acts as a secure transit lounge. Plant material sent between cocoa-growing regions can carry pests and diseases, so varieties destined for researchers and breeders elsewhere are brought to Reading, where they can be grown, checked and quarantined before being passed on.

Britain is suitable for this service precisely because it does not grow cocoa commercially, reducing the risk that an imported disease could escape into surrounding plantations.

The university said the centre handled 97 per cent of the international movements of cocoa plants, and had a collection of more than 300 types.

The pods produced in its glasshouses are typically removed and go unused.

For the university's centenary, however, Maha Khan, a master's student in food security, was allowed to make use of them.

She harvested pods, removed beans and carried out the processes needed to transform them into chocolate, including fermentation, drying, roasting, crushing and grinding. The cocoa was then combined with British-grown sugar and milk in the university's Department of Food and Nutritional Sciences. "It has been amazing to follow the entire chocolate-making process, from pod to bean to bar, without leaving Reading," Khan said.

She added the novelty of Berkshire chocolate carried a more serious message about the vulnerability of cocoa production by highlighting the "precarious nature" of food supplies.

"Cocoa plants are very sensitive to changes in temperature and rainfall, and climate change is already causing problems in countries that produce most of the world's cocoa," she said.

"Protecting different varieties is vital if farmers need hardier plants that can cope with a changing climate.

"I hope this shows people just how much work goes into the chocolate we enjoy, and how important it is to protect cocoa farmers and communities around the world."

Britain's chocolate market is worth more than £10 billion, according to the university, but most cocoa is grown in Africa, South America and Asia, often by small-scale farmers.

The homegrown Rowntree's bar was not just British but made from "100 per cent Yorkshire ingredients" according to Nestlé, which now owns the brand. The cocoa came from a tropical greenhouse in the grounds of its York factory where it also grew vanilla pods, pineapples and bananas.

The company said: "We decided that the most appropriate recipient was the little daughter of the Duke of York, never dreaming then that she would become queen."

Nearly a century later, the Berkshire crop is unlikely to turn Reading into the new home of the British chocolate industry. The university said it had no plans to put its homegrown chocolate on sale. It does, however, plan to offer a bar to a member of the royal family — but is yet to say which one.

UNIVERSITY OF READING/SWNS

Maha Khan with a locally sourced cocoa pod and the bar made to mark her university's centenary

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MIKE DAVIES/BUCKFAST ABBEY

Politician praised for 'fearless' faith

Ann Widdecombe was remembered for her "fearless" religious conviction and "friendship [that] did not follow party political lines" at her private funeral yesterday (Ed Halford writes).

The Right Rev David Charlesworth, the abbot of Buckfast Abbey, paid tribute to the former Conservative MP as someone who "liked you better once you had survived a vigorous debate with her".

About 100 close family members and friends of Widdecombe, who was Reform UK's immigration and justice spokeswoman, gathered at the abbey on the edge of Dartmoor National Park, where she regularly attended Sunday Solemn Mass after converting to Catholicism in 1993.

Widdecombe was found dead last month in her home in Haytor Vale, Devon.

Joshua Kerry, 28, has been charged with her murder. This week, The Times reported that police were investigating whether Kerry was linked to an incident when a lit incendiary device was pushed through the letterbox of the home of Nigel Farage, the Reform UK leader.

A large police presence was visible at the abbey's grounds from early in the morning before the service. About 20 police officers, accompanied by dogs, patrolled the area and checked inside flower beds and bins.

After the arrival of the hearse, Widdecombe's personal assistant Harriet Bastide, who was by the politician's side for 31 years, greeted mourners.

Charlesworth said in his homily: "In the midst of the shock, clamour and sometimes unwarranted comment surrounding her death, our response is to pray for the repose of her soul, to give thanks for her fortitude and offer Holy Mass in this abbey church which Ann called her safe haven."

He suggested that Widdecombe might be viewed as a martyr.

"There is no doubt that Ann fearlessly upheld the moral and social teachings of the Catholic church," he said. "Her voice regarding these issues certainly upset some.

"In past centuries, and elsewhere in the world today, men and women pay with their lives for holding fast to the Christian faith. As Tertullian, a Christian writer of the 2nd century, declared, 'The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.'"

Sir Mel Stride, the shadow chancellor and MP for Central Devon — the constituency in which Widdecombe lived — was the only MP in attendance.

About 100 close friends and family members attended the funeral of Ann Widdecombe at Buckfast Abbey in Devon yesterday

Mourners honoured a uniquely principled woman, leading article, page 29

Face-recognition cameras set to watch Oxford Street

Mark Ludlow

Facial recognition cameras are expected to be used soon by the Metropolitan Police to target crime on Oxford Street, the UK's busiest shopping thoroughfare.

The live facial recognition (LFR) technology is already in use in parts of Soho and the West End in the capital, with Sir Sadiq Khan, the London mayor, indicating that the technology is expected to be expanded to Oxford Street, part of which will be converted to pedestrian-only use, by October.

The cameras, which would be attached to street furniture such as lampposts, scan the faces of people walking past and cross-check them against those on a watchlist.

At City Hall Khan was asked about the introduction of the technology in the West End and appeared to confirm it would be used on the 0.6-mile stretch of Oxford Street that will become a pedestrian thoroughfare.

"The Met is working really closely with the Oxford Street Development Corporation about how, when we pedestrianise that street, we use LFR in a sensible way, using the opportunity of new CCTV to use LFR," he said.

"It is right and proper we should let the public know LFR is being used. The Met is very good at testing on individual sites before rolling out. What we do not do is a big bang as it would be a disaster. I am confident that we will have a good rollout in the West End."

About 500,000 people visit Oxford Street every day, making it a magnet for street crime and shoplifters.

LFR technology is widely used in China where the government has set up hundreds of millions of cameras, known as Skynet, to monitor citizens and for "predictive policing".

Ruth Ehrlich, of the human rights organisation Liberty, said the cameras would mark a "significant expansion of surveillance in public spaces". She added: "This technology scans the faces of everyone who passes by, regardless of whether they are suspected of any wrongdoing. If live facial recognition is to be deployed in one of the country's busiest shopping and tourist destinations, there must be full transparency about how it will be used, what safeguards are in place, and how its impact on people's rights will be monitored."

Ehrlich said a legal framework should be put in place first.

Recent polling commissioned by Liberty found that almost half of people opposed scanning faces of pedestrians on high streets when there was no suspected imminent threat.

Jasleen Chaggar, from the campaign group Big Brother Watch, urged Khan to abandon the plan, saying it would be a mistake. "Innocent Londoners who are not suspected of any crime by the police should be able to wander around public spaces without identifying themselves to the authorities," she said.

The Met first used fixed surveillance cameras during a six-month period in Croydon, south London, between October 2025 and May 2026. It led to 173 people being arrested including a woman wanted for more than 20 years.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Met's commissioner, said the force had made more than 2,000 arrests using the fixed cameras since the start of 2024.

The technology also started to be deployed at Tube stations this month.

A spokesperson for Khan said he was committed to transforming Oxford Street into a "world-class, pedestrian-friendly and safe destination", something which the LFR technology would help to achieve. "In Westminster, neighbourhood crime has fallen, with 14,000 fewer offences in the past year, and the Met's rollout of live facial recognition in the West End and Soho will help drive down crime rates even further," the spokesperson said.

Couple spend wedding night searching for their lost dog

Carla Jenkins

A newly married couple spent seven hours of their wedding night searching dense Scottish woodland for their beloved dog after the pet was spooked by the music during their first dance.

James and Victoria Pringle married on Saturday at Auchen Castle, near Moffat, Dumfriesshire, where four-year-old Pia, a spaniel-terrier cross, had acted as ring-bearer.

However, as the newlyweds took to the dance floor surrounded by 95 guests, the music startled the dog, which bolted through the castle's open front door into the night.

The couple spent the rest of the evening scouring the surrounding estate.

"She's our baby and we were absolutely distraught and barely went back inside for the rest of the night," Victoria, 28, said. "I howked up my dress and crawled through undergrowth looking for her. My dress was ripped and my legs covered in cuts and nettle stings. I'm not religious, but I started to pray."

The couple, from Hamilton, South Lanarkshire, were prepared to sleep in their car overnight rather than abandon the hunt. James, 29, said their fears for the dog were raised due to the proximity of a lake and the M74 motorway.

His uncle alerted Lost Dogs Dumfries & Galloway, and Lee Herron, who runs the volunteer search group, arrived with thermal binoculars, live tracking cameras and tins of sardines. She instructed the couple to lay a trail of fish around the lake to guide the dog back, suspecting Pia would return once the event quietened down.

James and Victoria Pringle were reunited with Pia after a long search

At 2am, minutes after the couple had finally gone to their room, Herron spotted the dog using a thermal imaging scope as it approached the castle entrance, guided by the sardine trail.

"They had gone from celebrating the best day of their lives to suddenly not knowing where their little girl was," she said. "It was a privilege to see them reunited, a really emotional moment."

Victoria added: "I really can't describe the relief ... Our tears of sadness turned to tears of joy."

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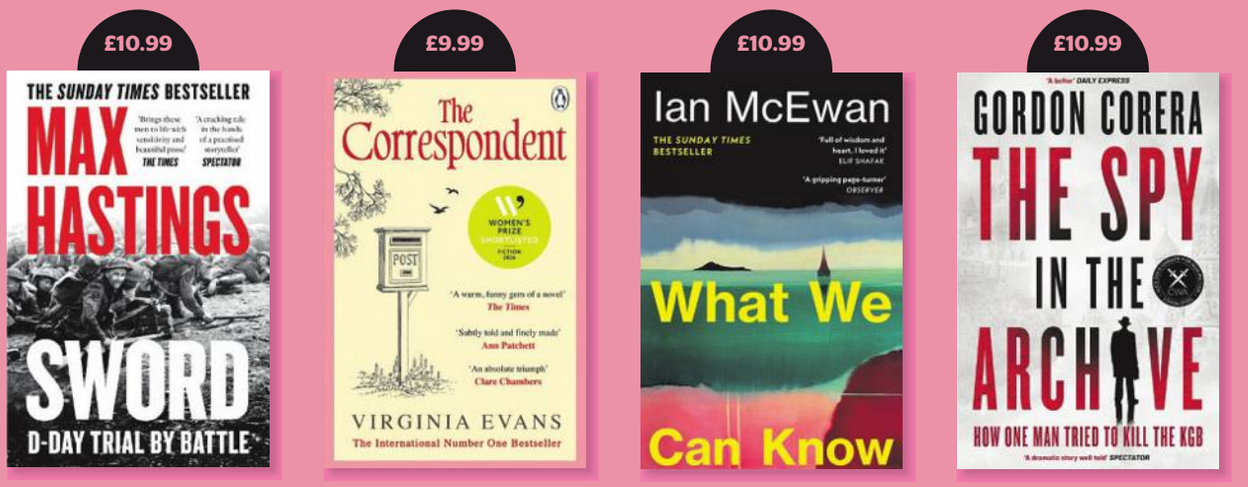

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Comment

AI will mean less drudgery, not fewer jobs

The future can be rich in careers that involve experimenting and cutting red tape, but not with Labour's current policies

Juliet Samuel

@CITYSAMUEL

The popular claim, the one that's meant to make you sound up-to-date, is that all those smiling, mop-haired young people are buggered. Soon, they'll be tearing open their A-level results and gaping and grinning and off they'll go to university, but in a few years they'll be spat out into a job market decimated by artificial intelligence, and then they'll realise their best option is a disability claim for "mental health". All the good, aspirational jobs? Gone.

I don't believe a word of it. I'm not saying it's easy out there or that we're thriving under the stranglehold of paper-pushing guilds the boomers call an economy. But that's just the point. What is so great about a system funnelling workers into legal reviews, impact assessments, consultations, HR processes, insurance files and so forth? Why should we be any more nostalgic for this stuff than for ox-drawn ploughs, witch doctors, bank tellers and washer women? Did their replacement with technology end the job market and make us poorer? Or did it do the opposite?

The AI age will be rich with careers that involve experimenting, tearing open specialist fields, gathering new knowledge and circumventing (or replacing) bureaucracy. We can of course choose policies that generate the "jobs massacre" a lot of ageing professionals seem to get a kick out of predicting. But AI itself isn't going to abolish work any more than libraries abolished schools.

In the US, where AI adoption is furthest along, there is no evidence of a jobs apocalypse. Nearly every sector employs more people than in 2022, before the launch of ChatGPT. Aside from the Covid blip, unemployment has stayed around 4 per cent for nine years. But there is a reallocation going on. A new tracker by the US data company Revelio has found that overall, there are slightly more people in jobs now than in 2022, but companies hiring for "AI-related" roles have increased their headcount by nearly a fifth. The firms hiring the most are those adopting AI the fastest.

The barons of Silicon Valley are changing their tune. Last year the head of Anthropic, Dario Amodei, was telling us all to prepare for a bonfire of the professional classes on the scale of Weimar. Sam Altman claimed all entry-level white collar jobs would disappear. Mark Zuckerberg said that AI would become "a sort of mid-level engineer", which didn't go down terribly well with Meta's mid-level engineers.

> In the US nearly every sector employs more people than in 2022

But with few signs of the jobs massacre, they have watered down their positions. The other side of the argument is now in the ascendant and it's Jensen Huang, head of the chip designer Nvidia, who's describing reality: "You're not going to lose your job to an AI, but you're going to lose your job to someone who uses AI."

If that still sounds a bit grim, that may be because you haven't realised that you too will soon be using AI, if you aren't already. At one point, I felt down in the dumps about the idea that AI will make writers into wainwrights. But then I started using it and realised I wasn't replacing myself; I was cutting out drudgery. The googling, scrolling, cross-referencing, managing tabs, creating timelines, finding products, locating highly specific kinds of information: I wasn't cutting out high-quality, creative work. I was cutting friction and administrative dross.

I discovered that I could use AI to compile lists of relevant former regulators now in the Lords; that it could quickly give me a series of links to legislation in a particular policy area and point me to changes over time so that I could ask an expert better questions; that it could find that half-remembered, decade-old article about smuggling routes through the Sahara; that it could rearrange a badly formatted report for easier reading; that it could help me dredge up GCSE physics on electromagnetism or make a list of news links showing how many leaders have promised to "rewire the state".

I could use it to generate age-appropriate spelling tests, to find comedies under 90 minutes, to compare new computer options, to troubleshoot apps, to find a suitable bottle of wine at a particular price or to make an almost-perfect family packing list for a long, multistage trip. Yes, I still needed to make the calls, set the spelling test, read the links, do the packing and hear a legal scholar discuss the legislation for myself. But much of the grind was gone.

I'm not an entry-level worker like today's A-level students soon will be. But AI makes me likely to produce more, and more likely to hire someone to help me, especially if they know how to set up agents that will perform all sorts of new tasks it has now occurred to me to want done.

The likes of Dario Amodei, head of Anthropic, are changing their tune

Andy Burnham's answer to the threat of AI being able to "draft a contract or make a slide deck" is to tout "practical skills" over "desk jobs" because AI still "can't make a train". I'm all in favour of nurturing trades and engineering over baristas with four A-levels and a BA in drama. But AI will without doubt make workers better at building trains, as it is already doing for maintenance, industrial processes, product testing and so forth. In the face of sweeping technological change, we need agility and a positive attitude to risk. Instead, we're getting policies that make it harder to employ the young.

The increase in national insurance, the extension of full employment rights to new staff, the rising minimum wage and Labour's threat to abolish the lower youth wage have all made it extremely unattractive to hire young people. Why give a 20-year-old her first job when six months later you'll be unable to fire her and paying the same wage and taxes as you would for a seasoned worker? If the market looks grim for today's school leavers, it's not because of AI, but because Labour is making unreasonable demands of businesses.

> I wasn't replacing myself, I was reducing administrative dross

I am not generally a tech enthusiast. New Apple products do not thrill me. I read books; I loathe the effect of smartphones on daily life; I have no desire for my fridge to go online and I quietly still wish I could travel by horse. And I suppose AI might yet kill us all. But it won't be because it has done away with the job market.

Humans will always find and create problems that need solving, nature will never be fully tamed, the world has boundless horizons to explore, from the infinitesimally small to the incomprehensibly vast. And economies will still need people to make discoveries, to verify claims, to teach and care for one another, to perform, to exercise judgment about trade-offs, to argue about the balance of rights between peoples, to build relationships and to trade new ideas. If those people have to spend less time writing planning documents, reading consultation responses and filling in databases, then I say, bring it on. No one ever wanted to do that stuff anyway.

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Comment

Be afraid of North Korea's move westwards

Kim's regime is now giving Putin an edge in Ukraine — and gaining a new foothold in Europe

Edward Lucas

@EDWARDLUCAS

North Korea is 5,000 miles away. But the personality cult in Pyongyang threatens us here in Britain. It runs a global cybercrime network that puts every British citizen at risk with fraud and scams. The proceeds pay for a nuclear weapons programme, which the dictator Kim Jong-un says is progressing "at an exponential rate", on a path that is "completely and absolutely irreversible".

Some of this may be bombast, of the kind that depicts life in the slave labour state (where incomes are one 50th of the capitalist South Korea's) as paradise. But the truth is that international efforts to curb the rogue state's nuclear programme have failed completely. North Korea is building more and better missiles, with bigger warheads, and working on new ways of firing them. Its navy, once a joke, is turning into an "instrument of nuclear coercion" according to a new paper from Aspi, an Australian think tank.

One reason is inattention from a shambolic White House. Another that Russia and China, which once paid at least lip service to international sanctions, are now coddling the Pyongyang regime. After Vladimir Putin's visit there in June 2024, North Korea started supplying munitions and soldiers to the Kremlin's war in Ukraine, in return for technical and economic help.

The millions of artillery and mortar rounds North Korea initially provided were so badly made that even Russians found them alarmingly risky. They damaged gun barrels and killed or injured the soldiers using them. Missiles supplied were wildly inaccurate. The 14,000 soldiers sent to Russia were ill-prepared, badly equipped and undertrained. Casualty rates were over 50 per cent.

Round two will be different. President Zelensky says that up to 50,000 North Korean soldiers will be deployed in coming months. They, perhaps coupled with hundreds of thousands of newly mobilised Russians, will try to swamp Ukraine's defences by sheer numbers. North Korean arms manufacturers have seen how their products work in demanding battlefield conditions, and have raised their standards. Russian advice and technical assistance have helped too. North Korean aim is increasingly accurate. An elite unit, staffed by 90 North Koreans and equipped with up to 120 ballistic missiles and six launchers, has begun deploying to Russia, probably to the southern Voronezh region, according to Ukrainian intelligence.

> Efforts to curb the rogue state's nuclear programme have failed

Russia is making deadly use of the 40 missiles already supplied. This week a North Korean strike killed seven civilian workers in a steelworks in Zaporizhia, less than two days' drive from Britain. Another recently destroyed a home in the village of Radushne, killing five members of one family, the Voronovs; five more are missing pending DNA tests on body fragments. Just another statistic.

The help from Pyongyang is a strategic worry for Ukraine, now grievously short of air defences and struggling to protect its battered industry, infrastructure and cities from attack: important bridges are a particular concern. It matters for South Korea too. At the Nato summit in Ankara last month I heard from South Korean sources how alarmed they are at the experience that the northern regime is gaining in modern warfare. For decades, its armed forces suffered from their country's international isolation, in terms of both training and equipment. South Korean intelligence says that the seasoned fighters who returned home after 2024 gained vital combat experience in drones, electronic warfare and modern battlefield tactics. A further 9,500 troops have remained in Russia since then. They appear to be involved in mine-clearing and other non-combat tasks. But they are still gaining useful experience.

Dependence on North Korean help is a humiliating sign of Russia's weakness. But it is blunting what could be Ukraine's best chance of winning what Zelensky calls "the battle in the sky" that will determine the war's outcome. Long-range strikes inside Russia are dealing devastating blows to the economy and particularly the energy system. At medium range, Ukraine's bombardment of supply lines is making the occupied Crimean peninsula unsustainable. But in missile defence, Ukraine faces a "structural" crisis, in the words of Fabian Hoffmann, a pundit who runs the "Missile Matters" newsletter. It is short of interceptors. Even if allies step up and donate them, these weapons cost many times more than the missiles they shoot down. Even if President Trump stops dithering and licenses Ukraine to make the Patriot interceptors that have proved most useful, it will take years to nail down the details and start production. Domestic innovation will help, but not for the perilous coming months.

Allies could do more: any efforts to plug the gap are better than none. But all of Europe is short of air defences (notably Britain); no country could defend itself against the kind of onslaught inflicted on Ukraine. Russia knows that too. The game-changing answer is to help Ukraine on other fronts. The military priority should be to hit not the arrows but the archers: the missile production and launch sites in Russia. That means boosting Ukraine's deep-strike production and further improving its effectiveness.

Even more powerful would be to exploit Russia's political weaknesses: using overt and secret means to wage cognitive warfare on confidence in the regime. One target should be the alliance with tinpot North Korea. Many Russians find it troubling, as repression takes their country in the same direction.

Russian cognitive war against the West has leveraged greed to weaken sanctions, and spread disinformation to stoke division, fear and resentment. It is high time we turned the tables.

Hilary Rose Notebook

Let's call last orders on an infuriating pub trend

Something strange is happening in our pubs and it confuses the hell out of my men friends: queueing. At a pub by the river last weekend, a friend was so appalled by the line of Gen Z-ers stretching in single file from the bar to the door that he insisted we leave. He says this is a new and insidious trend, driven by young people who know no better, and young bar staff who don't know how to stop it, but what is to be done? Should we stage an intervention?

In her 2004 book *Watching the English*, the social anthropologist Kate Fox decoded the unspoken rules of pubs, including what she called "the invisible queue". "Everyone knows who is next," she wrote. "The person who reached the bar before you will be served before you, and any obvious attempt to get served out of turn will be ignored by staff and severely frowned upon by other customers." Fox noted that this encourages sociability, because "it is one of the very few places in England where it is socially acceptable to strike up a conversation with a complete stranger". As opposed to, say, standing in a queue looking at your phone.

Some of the nicest pubs are too higgledypiggledy for queueing and anyway, whatever next? Queue dividers snaking round the saloon, like passport control? So we went to The Hound, my new local, where nobody queues and the view of a road is second to none. Peaceful country pubs or a river view are all very well, but I'm a Londoner. I'll take the road. Just don't ask me to queue for it.

Bourne ugly

To *The Odyssey* while it's still on the big screen, because watching it on a plane, where I usually watch films, would be pointless. I suspected I wouldn't love it, because the critics do and that's usually a red flag, be it books, films or art. So it proved. How many more times must they shout "Back to the boat!" and pelt along a beach? Again? Really? As for Matt Damon, I assume from his beard that he's hoping for an Oscar, ditto Tom Cruise as an unrecognisable old man in the forthcoming *Digger*, see also Brendan Fraser in *The Whale* and Charlize Theron in *Monster*. Ugly = gong. Personally, I'd have gonged Damon for Bourne, not this. Maybe that's why I'm not a critic.

No sweat …

The same government survey drops through my letterbox twice in a week. The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities is so keen for me to complete its Active Lives Survey that it's offering a bribe, a £5 gift voucher for "a range of retailers including department stores, fashion stores and restaurants". It's an interesting use of taxpayers' money and yet also, looking at the survey, not enough. Forty questions, over 16 pages, requesting exact hours and minutes spent doing whatever it is, with a helpful example. "I have played football on eight days in the past four weeks. I have not played cricket in the past four weeks but I have played both within the last 12 months …" Eh?

There are complex footnotes about what constitutes a community engagement activity, or playing a musical instrument, or even walking ("Exclude walking round the shops. Mountain/hill walking should be included on page five"). Have you done creative or artistic dance in the past four weeks? You have? How many minutes? Did you sweat? And we're still only on page three. Whose idea was this terrible waste of time and money? Who's so bored they'll respond? And is the voucher valid for Selfridges?

Paris or bust

A startling report in The Times last week claimed that breasts can provide an aerodynamic advantage in both the men's and women's Tour de France. "Increasing the size and changing the shape of the chest area, for both men and women … redirects the airflow around the body," it read. Stuffing a sock down your bra or stocking up on chicken fillets is therefore banned, as it can make the difference between winning and losing. Wowzers. I've thought many things about my bust over the years, most of them bitter, but I never thought it could win me the Tour de France.

THUNDERER

The public have a right to know who our MPs employ

George Greenwood

Access to the Houses of Parliament is a unique privilege. The very term "lobbying" originates from the practice of those seeking to influence politicians doing so from the "lobby" outside the voting chamber. It is no wonder that those with an interest in influencing politicians on behalf of paying clients might seek to obtain parliamentary passes that grant them unfettered access.

It is the risk of this access being misused that makes knowing who has passes so important; and makes the decision by parliament to cover up this information so fundamentally wrong. The move, made by the standards committee behind closed doors with no consultation, came following extensive lobbying from unions who argued it might reduce the abuse that MPs' staff receive.

There is no doubt that such staffers receive significant harassment, which sometimes reaches criminal levels. However, those determined to abuse staff are unlikely to be put off by having to make a few extra google searches to find out who they are. They may also simply continue to abuse them through MPs' inboxes, to which staff will remain exposed.

Ironically, the move will worsen the threats parliamentary staff face, not from anonymous trolls but from MPs themselves. Staff, who are abysmally paid, have appalling employment protections from abusive MPs, with no real HR function to call upon should an MP threaten to destroy future political careers if they raise a problem. Through their actions, the unions have just destroyed one route by which such MPs could be avoided by those wanting to work in parliament, with the public register showing which of them have very high turnovers of staff.

Separately, the register meant MPs could be called to account. It was used by The Times to reveal that the son of a Chinese lawyer, who was later found to be a threat to national security, was working for Barry Gardiner, Labour's then shadow international trade secretary. It was also used by the paper to identify how Rachel Reeves, when shadow chancellor, employed a member of staff who had been seconded from a lobbying company. The public register served as a powerful deterrent against MPs simply handing passes to their cronies, something that will no doubt become a greater problem now such activities can be concealed from public view.

The decision to cover up who has access to parliament is a political scandal waiting to happen. Sunshine is the best disinfectant. MPs should overturn this decision. If they choose not to, they cannot be surprised when public faith in politics drops yet further.

George Greenwood is investigations reporter at The Times

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Where are all those climate deniers now?

Not long ago, you couldn't move for voices rubbishing the idea of man-made global warming but they're suddenly quiet

Hugo Rifkind

@HUGORIFKIND

Where have all the climate sceptics gone? Remember them? Perhaps I shouldn't rake over the coals when it is already so hot but I could swear there used to be loads. For 20 years you couldn't write about climate change without them all abruptly descending on you, like those weird bluebottles we now get coming in from our garden whenever we cook fish. Politicians, pundits, dissident experts, on and on. What happened? Have they just shrivelled away, like our lawn? Have they been recycled? Are they in the brown bin? Guys, why so quiet?

I'm not talking here about people merely unconvinced by the economics of net zero. Nor even those who feel that anything we might do would be pointless virtue signalling, because we're small and China isn't. No, I mean the voices who used to tell you that it was all rubbish. That man-made global warming wasn't really a thing, and that people who pretended it was were secretly communists. Because now, with UK temperatures set to hit 35C at least once for an unprecedented four months in a row, I do find myself wondering if there is anything that any of them would like to say.

True, they haven't all disappeared. Donald Trump is still around. Less than two years ago, he called climate science "the greatest con job ever perpetrated on the world". What's more, he added, "all of these predictions made by the United Nations and many others, often for bad reasons, were wrong". Um, were they? Take a walk in Hyde Park, Donald. Feel the Velcro-like grass crunch under your feet and the fake tan trickle down your shirt collar. Still sure about that?

Slaloming down the pay grades somewhat, there's Nigel Farage, who also called global warming "a scam" and said it was "absolutely nuts" to call CO2 a pollutant. Likewise his buddy Richard Tice, who last year hit out at "the idea that, arrogantly, we think we can stop the power of the sun, stop the power of volcanoes". According to Nasa, volcanoes produce less than 1 per cent of the CO2 that human activity does. That said, they're only Nasa. What would they know? Pretty arrogant of them to disagree with Richard Tice.

Were I of a more bitter disposition, I would now start naming newspaper columnists. I won't, partly because I'm wary of sounding like Father Ted ("… and now we move on to liars!") but also because a lot of them have my mobile number. It's not so long, though, since columns insisting climate change was bunkum were a mainstay of British journalism, with writers, on the back of no scientific expertise at all, saying stuff like "the greenhouse effect probably doesn't exist". Meanwhile, The Spectator (for which I wrote for a decade, and where I had the whole "hey guys, maybe this stuff is real?!" genre pretty much to myself) ran a cover story in 2009 headlined "Relax: Global Warming Is All A Myth". Hmm. Was it?

> I did not foresee the lack of shame … No mea culpas. Nothing

This sort of thing probably had its heyday that year with the so-called "Climategate" scandal. Both space and borderline suicidal ennui prevent me from recapping it extensively, but it was basically a story derived from leaked emails between climate scientists, in which they used casual language about data, which they nonetheless used flawlessly. For the sceptics this proved the whole climate discipline to be a fraud, no matter that the scientists were, and remain, dead right. Similar was the fight over the "hockey stick" graph used in Al Gore's climate documentary *An Inconvenient Truth*, which was also somehow declared totemic of dodgy climate science, even though it also wasn't wrong and still isn't.

It would be overkill, perhaps, to suggest that the world would definitely have acted sooner, smarter and better to avert climate change without these blithe and ill-faith narratives polluting global discourse. Certainly, though, they contributed hugely towards a political landscape in which inaction became a powerful rallying cry for much of the right, rather than a sign of blunt unseriousness. Perhaps you remember David Cameron, responsible for the "vote blue, go green" environmentalism of the Conservatives, declaring in the House of Commons that he agreed with the Met Office that climate change had probably worsened the floods of 2014. According to The Guardian, his own backbenchers offered up "a backdrop of groans".

A hunt for villains, to be fair, will find them on all sides. If the Cop climate conferences of recent years have descended into a stuttering farce, then at least a part of that is due to the willingness of many developing nations to stall progress in order to blackmail richer countries into paying "reparations". Advocates of renewable energy, meanwhile, have overpromised and underdelivered, as seen by stories this week about wind farm operators being compensated for producing more electricity than the neglected national grid can handle. If climate scepticism is now being replaced by climate fatalism, no wonder.

Having written about our changing climate for most of my career, there are two aspects of all this that I did not, in my naivety, see coming. The first is that inaction would win, and look set to keep winning, even while the predictions of the climatologists were proven true, day after sweaty summer day.

The second is that there would be no shame. No mea culpas. Nothing. Because you expect at least some, don't you? When people say a thing, fiercely and combatively, and that thing turns out to be wrong. God knows I've got a lot wrong on these pages, and God willing I'll be indulged to get plenty more wrong in the future. In a bad week, that makes for a long night of the soul. In a good one, it's grist for the mill of the next column. But to just slink away? To pretend it never happened, even when the stakes were so high? How could you? How can they? Where have they all gone?

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Letters to the Editor

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Early election bet

Sir, James Johnson's observations on the possible consequences of Andy Burnham calling an early general election are fascinating ("PM must seize his Goldilocks moment", Aug 12). Although an early election might be in Burnham's political interest — particularly if it resulted in Reform winning more than 100 seats and the near-extinction of the Conservative Party — it is far less clear that such an outcome would be in the wider interests of the country. The prospect of Reform becoming the official opposition, and subsequently winning a general election and forming a government, would represent a profound change in British politics.

As Johnson points out, however, a second by-election in Clacton, were Nigel Farage to be defeated, could prove a decisive turning point. Such a result might lead to the collapse of Reform and a return to the more traditional two-party system.

Despite Johnson's calculations, the present polling figures appear at least as likely to produce a hung parliament. In these circumstances, Burnham's most prudent course might be to await the outcome of the investigation by the parliamentary authorities into Farage. If this were followed by a second by-election in Clacton, Farage's defeat could have a serious effect on Reform's prospects and on the future shape of politics.

John Grossman
Northwood, Middx

MP resignations

Sir, I agree with Conal Gregory (letter, Aug 11) that the bar for standing in parliamentary elections needs to be set higher to discourage mass candidacies, as in the Clacton by-election. But I would go further and review the whole process of by-elections. In particular, the archaic process whereby MPs cannot resign their seats but have to apply to the chancellor to be appointed either the steward of the Chiltern Hundreds or of the Manor of Northstead is absurd. Nigel Farage, the present steward of Northstead, joins a long list of former holders of that title including David Cameron, Gerry Adams, Peter Mandelson and Boris Johnson. Once the Clacton by-election is done and dusted the prime minister should ask the Electoral Commission to review the Representation of the People Act — including the process for by-elections — and to make recommendations for an overhaul and modernisation of the system.

Alun Evans
London SE10

Corrections and clarifications

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Analysis of the high pay of some GP partners

Sir, Your article "One in ten GP partners earn at least £250k a year" (Aug 12) highlights the need for a rethink on NHS funding of general practices, which are essentially private businesses. Previously when a partner retired, he/she would have been replaced by another. Now the remaining partners often choose a salaried GP, a nurse, a pharmacist, a physiotherapist or even a physician's associate (assistant) at a much lower cost, thereby increasing the practice's profits and each partner's share.

My two medical daughters work as salaried GPs. One, when working for a GP partnership, is paid one third of the rate she receives per session from the local health board at another surgery, without partners. The other works in a large practice run by a few remaining partners, who do not work on Mondays or Fridays.

The present arrangements are open to profiteering and abuse.

Dafydd Thomas
Ret'd neurologist and professor emeritus, Imperial College;
Chesham, Bucks

Sir, Your report that one in ten GP partners earns £250,000 a year invites outrage. The arithmetic invites the opposite conclusion. There are just under 18,000 GP partners in England, and a thousand of them above £300,000 is 5.6 per cent. Compare the Big Four accountancy firms, whose 3,000 equity partners averaged between £787,000 and £1.05 million last year, almost all of them more than £300,000. At the rates seen in accountancy and law, a profession of this size and seniority would produce several times as many such earners. Your headline does not show that family doctors are overpaid. It shows the opposite.

Dr William J Turner
Consultant anaesthetist, Kingston Hospital, Surrey

Sir, Your report that some GP partners earn at least £250,000 a year overlooks the cost of financing the properties in which the GP operates. The fact that some GPs manage to make a reasonable profit is a tribute to their business management skills. The priority of every business is to generate profit and growth; GP practices are no exception. The partners take on the financing of their property (a cost that is not included in your headline figure), the delivery of the contracted service and the recruitment, training and management of staff. They have the ever-present risk that an erratic government may suddenly decide to change the model. They also have to meet their ever-changing contractual obligations and targets and, on retirement, have the risk that they may not have a successor to take on the debt burden. I congratulate the small percentage of GPs managing to turn a handsome profit and applaud these practices for continuing to provide safe and cost-effective patient care in an uncertain political environment.

Nick Gamble
Little Somerford, Wilts

Sir, Just like GP partners or their employee doctors, community pharmacists are also not directly employed by the NHS. But one very unfair distinction is that while all GP surgery staff are eligible to join the NHS defined benefit pension scheme, community pharmacy staff are not. No wonder so many pharmacists steer clear of community pharmacy and instead prefer to work in hospitals, for local health boards, primary care trusts and GP surgeries.

Robert Evans
Pharmacist, Wrexham

Overdue review of e-scooter safety

Sir, Laurence Sleator ("Children hurt and killed by e-scooters", Aug 12) highlights a long overdue need for a government review of powered transport. I see pedestrians driven off the pavements by cycles, scooters, disability scooters and electric wheelchairs, while some impressively fast electric wheelchair users prefer to use the road, regardless of traffic. I increasingly see electric cycles as big and as fast as the moped of my youth but with no requirement for driver registration, vehicle registration, insurance or helmet. Many newer forms of transport have the potential to be of invaluable assistance to those of us who remain poorly served by public transport but they require integration and regulation to protect the users and the wider public. I cannot understand why we have no revised guidance and legislation. Should the Department for Transport be struggling with this, I could produce a draft in about an hour.

Diane Cherryman
Melton Mowbray, Leics

Sir, In all the conversations about reducing speed limits to 20mph (letters, Aug 11 & 12), can I point out that a pedestrian can only be hurt by a car if they are in the road, so why have we stopped teaching road safety as the best way to prevent accidents? It seems that all the fault nowadays is deemed to belong to the driver.

Sara Blackmore
Whiteley, Hants

A-level results day

Sir, Emily Formstone's story took me back to when my daughter received her A-level results ("I missed my A-level grades. Here is how I still got to Oxford", Aug 12). To say they were disappointing is an understatement. She immediately contacted her university of choice, which confirmed her place on her chosen course based on her interview. Three years later, she left with a 2.1 degree and went on to achieve a masters degree. After working in the arts for several years, she decided to change career and achieved a first-class midwifery degree. The A-level results are now forgotten.

Deanne Clay
Shipston on Stour, Warks

Tree-cooling effect

Sir, It was good to see The Times highlighting the role of urban trees in keeping cities cooler ("In The Shade", leading article, Aug 11). However, you overlooked the vital role that urban soils play in keeping cities cooler. Soils store water, which is then pumped up into the atmosphere by vegetation, which has a cooling effect. This requires water to be stored in the soil, which in turn requires our cities to become more permeable so that urban soils are connected to rainfall and run-off rather than being buried beneath concrete and tarmac. As our country becomes more urban and droughts and floods more frequent, we need to ensure that we maintain the connection between the soil and the atmosphere wherever possible

John Quinton
Emeritus professor of soil science, Lancaster University;
Arnside, Cumbria

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

MOSQUITO OIL FLIES OFF THE SHELVES

FROM THE TIMES AUGUST 13, 1926

There is at present considerable complaint, from residents and visitors, of the increase in the numbers of mosquitoes in and about Epping Forest.

So many visitors to the forest have been bitten that it has become the custom locally to protect the face and arms by applying an "anti-mosquito oil", the sale of which, according to reports, has been very large in neighbouring districts like Chingford, Loughton and Epping. The mosquito found in these parts, as in most localities, is the Culex, and not, happily, one of the poisonous malaria-carrying Anophelinæ, some types of which were found during the war. Although the results of being bitten by the Culex are seldom serious, there have been cases of large blisterings and swellings, likened to the small end of an egg. Lawn tennis players have frequently suffered from the bites of these insects, and women declare that silk stockings attract the mosquitoes. A chemist in Chingford stated yesterday that he had been selling on an average 150 bottles of lotion and oil every week since the early part of May, and several persons, who appeared to be particularly susceptible, had had to call repeatedly for relief.

In Epping Forest, as in other parts of the country, much has been done towards combating the nuisance in early spring by the spraying of ponds with crude oil and paraffin, which prevent the larvæ from getting the air necessary to their existence. An effort systematically to cover all the ponds and likely breeding-places, however, would be impracticable. In Epping Forest care is necessary not to interfere with the drinking facilities for cattle, but the Forest Committee has from time to time cooperated with local bodies and minimized the nuisance materially.

Dr Butler Harris, the medical officer of the Loughton Urban District, stated yesterday that he thought the trouble was of about the average extent for the period of the year. The Culex gnat bred in damp leaves and pools and cellars, and most people who were bitten found rapid relief from the ordinary treatment.

A campaign against mosquitoes generally is being carried on by the British Mosquito Control Institute at Hayling Island.

THETIMES.COM/ARCHIVE

Beauty in building

Sir, The government has some nerve, posing as a champion of beauty in the high street ("Building Beautiful", leading article, Aug 12). Pretty much its first act on coming to power was to go through the National Planning Policy Framework with a red pen, striking out every reference to the word "beauty". While we can quietly welcome this small act of repentance, we need to go further than titivating the fascias of vape shops. Andy Burnham might start by undoing the damage done by Sir Keir Starmer, and go back to making beauty a material consideration in the planning system. Then our Building Beauty Awards, which annually celebrate beauty in new British architecture, might in due course have a longer list of potential winners.

Robert Bargery
Royal Fine Art Commission Trust

Funding the arts

Sir, Tristan Hambleton (letter, Aug 12) suggests a Performing Arts Fund on the model of the Art Fund. One has existed since 1948: after a strike of 27 months, the American Federation of Musicians won a royalty on every record sold, paid into what became the Music Performance Trust Fund, which has employed musicians to give free public concerts ever since. It was not endowed by government or by public subscription. The industry that displaced the musicians was made to pay for the music instead.

Britain need not invent a Performing Arts Fund. It has had the collecting machinery since 1914, in the Performing Right Society. It has never decided whom to invoice.

David Woodard
Conductor; Tampere, Finland

Convertible home

Sir, Conscious of how easily my soft-top Citroën 2CV was to break into (letter, Aug 12), when I moved to Edinburgh I decided that the safest course of action was to leave it unlocked, which I did. As Edinburgh is a great city for walking everywhere, it was a few weeks before I returned to the car — only to find that a homeless person appeared to have moved in, and that it was littered with takeaway wrappers and drinks tins.

David Johnston
Athelstaneford, East Lothian

Cinematic odyssey

Sir, I was interested that Sathnam Sanghera (Aug 10) was disappointed with the Imax projection of *The Odyssey*. I had a similar experience at my local Imax. There are only three cinemas in the UK capable of projecting true 70mm Imax film: the BFI, the Science Museum and the Printworks, Manchester. What most of us are seeing is a digitised or laser transfer from the original film, with a consequent loss of quality. Moreover the picture frame has been narrowed, losing the full widescreen effect. Christopher Nolan shot 70mm film. Only a few of us can actually enjoy the immersive experience of seeing what he actually filmed.

Keith Sheather
Bristol

Sir, We bravely endured nearly two hours of the lauded *Odyssey* (letter, Aug 11). Once I heard the line "Leave their armour out back" I caved, and we left. No request for a refund, just a lesson in listening, too eagerly, to hype.

Mrs Phil Proud
Leicester

Daily Universal Register

UK: Clacton by-election is held; estimate of UK GDP for the second quarter of 2026 and trade statistics published.

Nature notes

The writer of your nature notes was working under an oak when he found himself sharing his improvised office with an inquisitive insect. The gatecrasher announced its presence with a rattling, droning noise, then landed with a clunk on the laptop. The body, shaped like an escutcheon, revealed the newcomer as a shield bug; the orange legs and orange spot on its scutellum specified that this was the red-legged shield bug. Often living high up in the canopy of oaks (they sometimes favour beeches, alders and hazel), red-legged shield bugs can come down to earth to look for a meal. When tree sap or honeydew is scarce, these insects can be carnivorous, munching on caterpillars and aphids. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today

Madhur Jaffrey, *pictured*, actress and cookery writer, *Curry Nation* (2012), 93; **Shoaib Akhtar**, cricketer, Pakistan (1997-2007), 51; **Martyn Brabbins**, conductor, music director, English National Opera (2016-23), 67; **Domenico Dolce**, fashion designer, Dolce & Gabbana, 68; **Ken Friar**, life president, Arsenal Football Club, 92; **Divina Galica**, four-time Olympian (skiing) and Formula 1 driver (1976, 1978), 82; **Kristalina Georgieva**, economist, managing director, International Monetary Fund, 73; **Paul Greengrass**, film director, the Jason Bourne film series, 71; **Marie Helvin**, model, 74; **Scott Kirby**, chief executive, United Airlines, 59; **Stuart Maconie**, writer, *Hope and Glory* (2012), and radio presenter, *Freak Zone*, BBC Radio 6, 65; **Christopher Nourse**, founder executive director, Frederick Ashton Foundation (ballet charity), 80; **Sir David Payne**, professor of photonics, director of the Optoelectronics Research Centre, University of Southampton (1995-2023), 82; **Simon Peckham**, co-founder and chief executive (2012-24), Melrose (investment company), 64; **Philippe Petit**, high-wire artist, 77; **José Pizarro**, chef and restaurateur, 55; **Christopher Raeburn**, fashion designer, 44; **Baroness (Minouche) Shafik**, president and vice-chancellor, London School of Economics (2017-23), 64; **Feargal Sharkey**, singer, the Undertones (1975-83), *A Good Heart* (1985), 68; **Alan Shearer**, footballer, England (1992-2000), and commentator, 56; **Joe Simpson**, mountaineer and writer, *Touching the Void* (1988), 66; **Tomasz Starzewski**, fashion designer, 65; **Phil Taylor**, darts player, winner of 16 world championships, 66; **Heidi Thomas**, TV scriptwriter, *Call the Midwife* (since 2012), 64; **Lt Gen Sir Philip Trousdell**, general officer commanding, Northern Ireland (2003-05), 78; **Janet Yellen**, economist, US secretary of the Treasury (2021-25), 80.

On this day

In **1912** the social reformer Octavia Hill, one of the three founders of the National Trust, died aged 73. The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was formed on January 12, 1895, with the solicitor Sir Robert Hunter and clergyman Hardwicke Rawnsley.

The last word

"He that plants trees loves others besides himself." Thomas Fuller, writer and physician, *Gnomologia* (1732)

Catastrophic Failure

Police and prosecutors missed numerous opportunities to stop the killer and rapist Simon Levy. The victims' families and the public rightly demand answers fast

The depths of human wickedness are fathomless. They have been plumbed by Simon Levy. At the Old Bailey yesterday, Levy was sentenced to a whole-life tariff — meaning he will die in prison — for murdering two women, Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo and Sheryl Wilkins, in 2025, and violently raping another woman, who cannot be named.

Levy might have been stopped. Yet a catalogue of errors by the British Transport Police (BTP), Metropolitan Police and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) left him free to commit heinous crimes. The public, and above all the families of Levy's victims, are owed answers. Shabana Mahmood, the home secretary, must swiftly secure them, to do justice to the women's memories and assuage public dismay. It cannot require a protracted inquiry to grasp how great is the collective failure of institutions whose purpose is to protect the public.

Levy committed these crimes while on bail for other offences. His documented attacks on women date back almost a decade. The Met received a complaint against him as early as 2017. He went on to assault two women the following year, for which he was convicted in 2021. While in prison, he sexually assaulted a female officer. On release, he committed further assaults against ten women on trains and the London Underground.

It defies comprehension that, as a registered sex offender being monitored by the police, Levy had the opportunity to commit assault, rape and murder. His proclivities and the dangers he posed were obvious. Yet police missed numerous opportunities to intervene. The BTP initially failed to identify Levy, who was not charged for more than six months — despite there being video evidence of him groping a woman on the Tube shortly after his release. Accused of rape, Levy then returned to prison to serve the brief remainder of his sentence, yet the Met then downgraded his status from a high-risk to a medium-risk offender. In all his subsequent attacks on women on public transport, he was granted bail.

The police treated these offences as somehow not so dangerous as to show a deadly hostility to women. Yet that is what they presaged, and what they were. Astonishingly, the Met accepted at face value Levy's pretence to have been watching films at home in the weeks when he murdered his victims. And when Levy was on bail for the murder of Carmenza Valencia-Trujillo, the CPS unaccountably failed to tell the magistrates' court, as it knew from the BTP, that he was "a danger to the public" and had a "total disregard for bail conditions".

Sir Mark Rowley, the Met chief commissioner, correctly noted yesterday that Levy was repeatedly put before the courts yet kept on being bailed. Sir Mark was far less forthcoming, however, about the Met's own culpability. The Independent Office for Police Conduct has issued a gross misconduct notice on a Met police constable, and a misconduct notice on a detective sergeant. But the failings in Levy's case clearly run deeper than those of individual police officers.

The questions are legion. Why was Levy released early? Why was he repeatedly allowed bail? Why did the police and the CPS not spot the dangers? And were the police less minded to take seriously the plight of women who engaged in sex work on the streets, as each of Levy's three victims did on occasion to fund drug habits?

There is a long and dismal history of institutional insouciance, and much worse, due to such prejudice. It is just five years since Wayne Couzens, a serving Met officer, murdered a young woman, Sarah Everard. His hatreds were evident in a history of sexual offences, yet these did not count against his employment. This culture must end. Violence against women is a lethal social evil. There must now be real accountability not only for individual failings but for what appears to be systemic malaise in public life.

Cooler Heads

Warmer summers are the new norm so it is better to focus on how to adapt

Nineteen seventy-six was the British summer of an unusually long heatwave — the one against which others will be forever measured. Compared with the record-breaking temperatures of 50 years ago, 2026 has had shorter, more intense bursts of heat. The nights are warmer and the humidity higher this year, but much else is the same: widespread hosepipe bans, arid fields and wave after wave of dire warnings from the Met Office.

Whereas the hot summer of '76 was judged to be a rarity, 2026 may mark the new norm. It is beyond dispute that climate change is happening; the evidence is all around us with the hotter summers that come with it. The question is how to respond: do we succumb to hysteria that this is the end of normal life as we know it? The BBC, for example, struggles to issue a weather report without an accompanying lecture about global warming. Or do we find the best ways to adapt and carry on?

A heatwave in London is guaranteed to raise the political temperature, and Andy Burnham has duly called the first crisis meeting of his premiership over the weather. The urgency may seem odd to those in the cooler parts of the country. It is quite right that ministers act with urgency on avoidable deaths. But the challenge on the climate, as with much in public health, is perspective. The UK needs to plant more trees in its cities to better deal with urban heat. Air conditioning needs to be installed in more homes and on public transport. It urgently needs to build more reservoirs to better cope with longer periods without rain.

The truth is that our planet is warming but it is also becoming wealthier, allowing us to adapt. That is why extreme weather events claim fewer global deaths now than they did a century ago. This may be cold (or not so cold) comfort to farmers struggling with the lack of hydration and labourers working in the heat. But we should not overlook achievements in adaptation: the fastest-growing economies in the United States are those of sweltering Texas and Arizona.

Some 1,500 deaths were attributed to England's heat last summer, while cold temperatures are linked to at least 20,000 a year in a typical winter. The UK's number of "excess winter deaths" has fallen over the decades but the toll is still worse, per capita, than far colder countries such as Norway. Cold is the bigger killer on these islands. The 2006 Stern Review into global warming quoted government modelling to the effect that, by 2050, heat-related mortality would rise by 2,000 but cold-related deaths would fall by 20,000.

The sad truth is that a pensioner dying in winter has less political salience than those in the heat. There are some 140,000 avoidable deaths a year in the UK — more than three times as common in the poorest areas than the richest ones. That gap continues to grow.

Mr Burnham cannot do much about the weather. On climate change, Britain's emissions have fallen faster than almost any G20 country and now stand at the lowest since Victorian days. They must fall further still, but an island that accounts for 1 per cent of global emissions cannot expect to exert direct control over the global climate. The number of British people who die from avoidable causes — heat, cold, obesity or anything else — is a dial the prime minister can move. This is where he should focus his efforts, as well as better adapting the nation. Discouraging the use of disposable barbecues, as he did yesterday, is not enough.

An English Original

Mourners at Ann Widdecombe's funeral honoured a uniquely principled woman

Ann Widdecombe's parliamentary career was in many ways a tribute not only to her formidable talents, but to the good sense of the British electorate and, until recently, the inclusive nature of British politics. She was eccentric yet also palpably authentic, so people warmed to her. She was not, by her own admission, smooth, diplomatic or telegenic. She said what she thought, abhorring jargon or equivocation. She held some trenchant, deeply unfashionable views. Yet the Conservative Party, and latterly Reform UK, found room for her, and the public admired her.

As did many of her opponents. As with Sir David Amess, her friend and fellow victim of shocking violence, Ms Widdecombe was held in high regard by many who vehemently disliked her social conservatism. That was because the same devout Christianity that underpinned her ethical absolutism taught her to treat adversaries as well as allies with equal respect, good manners, dignity and, often, touching personal kindness. Current politicians would do well to take note.

Ms Widdecombe was also, as seen in her later-life transformation into, variously, showbiz trouper, reality TV star, novelist, memoirist, actress and columnist, upbeat, feisty and great fun. She took her beliefs seriously; herself less so. Those beliefs were always well-examined and thought through, never lazily plundered off a convenient ideological shelf. She supported capital punishment while opposing foxhunting: not a common combination. This rigour extended to matters of personal probity, such that she was one of few MPs to emerge with honour from the expenses scandal of 2009.

The ghastly manner of her death should not define Ann Widdecombe's life. Her long record of public service remains intact. Her achievements stand. Her courage in her convictions will endure as a lesson to all. She will be much missed.

World

Ayatollah brings back master of oppression

New security chief was seen as too obsessed and unstable even for Tehran's regime, writes **Fatemeh Jamalpour**

Few people have seen Hossein Taeb smile. His old friend Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei might be among them. In photograph after photograph, the cleric, 63, appears beneath a white turban, his silver beard framing the same forbidding scowl. Taeb has spent the past four years in the shadows. Before that, his career was defined by implementing domestic repression, and by 13 years leading an intelligence service repeatedly humiliated by Israeli infiltration.

Now one of Khamenei's oldest and most trusted allies has returned to the top of Iran's command chain after claims that the new leader's father sought to marginalise him during the final years of his rule.

Iranian state media announced this week that Khamenei had appointed Taeb to command the Basij, the Islamic Republic's vast paramilitary force. A political analyst in Tehran, speaking anonymously for security reasons, said Taeb's return could have immediate consequences.

"The Islamic Republic is probably preparing for a new series of confrontations, and these could have consequences at street level," the analyst said. "We are likely to see arrests across society, possibly at the same time as another war begins to take shape."

Omid Memarian, a senior Iran analyst at Dawn, a Washington-based think tank, said: "Hossein Taeb's appointment to lead the Basij is particularly revealing because he is fundamentally a security and intelligence figure."

The Basij is part of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and is embedded in Iran's neighbourhoods, universities, workplaces, factories, ministries and mosques. It claims to be able to mobilise 600,000 volunteers in support of the regime, and members receive benefits that can include preferential access to university places, public sector employment and promotion.

They attend government rallies and religious events but, in moments of crisis, can also be armed and deployed against protesters. The force has played a central role in suppressing successive uprisings, from the Green Movement of 2009 to the nationwide protests this January. "The Basij is the regime's most extensive grassroots security network," Memarian said. "Putting Taeb at its head can bring intelligence gathering, surveillance and street-level mobilisation much closer together."

Taeb's relationship with Khamenei dates back four decades. In the Iran-Iraq war both served in the Habib Battalion of the IRGC, which Khamenei joined as a 17-year-old volunteer.

The experience created a network of friendships that endured as its members rose through military and security institutions. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, the parliamentary speaker, is another longstanding associate.

Born Hassan in Tehran, Taeb is said to have adopted the name of his brother Hossein after he was killed during the war. After studying at seminaries in Qom, Tehran and Mashhad, Taeb joined the IRGC in 1982. He later moved to the intelligence ministry, where he worked in counterintelligence during the 1990s.

He was eventually removed from the ministry. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the former president, described him as unbalanced and obsessed with fabricating cases against opponents. "He was at the intelligence ministry, and they threw him out because he set people against one another," Ahmadinejad said. "Then they took him somewhere else and gave him unlimited powers, without any law."

After leaving the intelligence ministry, Taeb returned to the IRGC. He became deputy commander of the Basij in 2007 and assumed command the next year. When millions of Iranians protested against Ahmadinejad's disputed re-election in 2009, the Basij became one of the principal forces used to crush the movement. Ali Motahari, then a conservative member of parliament, wrote: "When we place the management of a crisis in the hands of people such as Taeb, who are more familiar with the baton than with thought, reason and prudence, this is the result."

The United States sanctioned Taeb in 2010, citing the involvement of forces under his command in the beating, killing and arbitrary detention of peaceful protesters. The European Union imposed sanctions a year later.

At about this time, the Guards' intelligence division was elevated into an independent organisation, with Taeb as its first chief. Over the next 13 years, IRGC intelligence increasingly overshadowed the intelligence ministry. It arrested political activists, journalists, environmentalists and dual nationals on broadly defined allegations of espionage and foreign "infiltration".

For all Taeb's reputation as a ruthless operator, his final years as the head of IRGC intelligence were marked by a series of security failures. Israel removed a nuclear archive from a warehouse in Tehran, assassinated Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a senior figure in Iran's nuclear programme, and conducted operations against military and nuclear personnel inside the country.

On June 23, 2022, Taeb was removed from his post. The Tehran analyst said Taeb's removal formed part of an attempt by the supreme leader Ali Khamenei to reduce the influence of Mojtaba and his security circle. "The elder Khamenei began removing Taeb and, in effect, reducing Mojtaba's influence within the leader's office," he said. "If Ali Khamenei had remained alive and eventually died of natural causes, rather than during a war, Mojtaba certainly would not have become leader."

According to the analyst, some officials privately described the succession as "the coup that selected Mojtaba Khamenei as leader".

He argued that the US-Israeli bombardment, Ali Khamenei's death and the elimination of senior commanders and potential rivals created the conditions in which Mojtaba's circle could take control.

The analyst placed Taeb within a circle associated with a highly politicised interpretation of Mahdism, the Shia belief in the eventual appearance of the Twelfth Imam. "Mahdism is a profoundly important and serious matter within the Islamic Republic," he said. "They believe the world must be prepared for the appearance of the Mahdi."

He argued that this worldview was influential among figures close to the new leadership, including Mojtaba Khamenei and Taeb, and pointed to Khamenei's frequent use of the phrase "our master, the Guardian of the Age".

In what the analyst described as the most extreme interpretation of this belief, sacrifice on a vast scale could be justified by the conviction that the Islamic Republic had a divine mission. "They believe that even if 60 million Iranians have to be sacrificed, then so be it — the Mahdi will appear," he said.

The Times could not independently substantiate that assertion or establish that Taeb personally shared such an extreme interpretation. Taeb's brother, Mehdi, however, has publicly described the Islamic Republic as a precursor to the government of the Twelfth Imam and linked Iran's regional interventions to preparing the world for his return.

Within this worldview, the analyst

Paramilitaries take part in a parade of a reported 110,000 Basij and Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces in Tehran last year. The return of Hossein Taeb, left, as the leader of the Basij is seen as a signal that repression is likely to increase

Botched roads and bridges keep India in the slow lane
Page 32

De Gaulle clan split over plans to sell former home
Page 34

HOSSEIN BERIS/GETTY IMAGES; ALAMY

said, the Islamic Republic was not merely a state responsible for its citizens' security and prosperity. "It is an instrument for expanding clerical guardianship, building an Islamic civilisation and preparing society for the appearance of the Mahdi," he said. "The survival of the regime can therefore take precedence over the everyday needs of the population."

Adherents of this worldview regard Iran as part of a divinely sanctioned "front of truth", he added, while America, Israel and western civilisation represent a "front of falsehood". Confrontation with the West is therefore seen not as an ordinary dispute that can be resolved through negotiation, but as part of a historical struggle.

Farzin Nadimi, an analyst of Iranian military and security policy at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said Taeb's return and the wider appointments reflected both wartime necessity and a shortage of replacements. "The heavy reliance on veteran hardliners after significant leadership losses, the simultaneous focus on internal mobilisation and the urgent structural reforms indicate anxiety about vulnerabilities on both the external and domestic fronts," he said.

Other appointments announced in recent days included a return for Mohsen Rezaei, an IRGC veteran who led the force during the Iran-Iraq war and had been serving as an adviser to Khamenei. He has been named head of Iran's highest national security body.

Memarian said: "The message of Taeb's appointment is that the regime is preparing for two fronts at once: another confrontation abroad and potential unrest at home." The appointment, he added, was "a sign of anxiety, not confidence".

While President Trump has repeatedly claimed that Iran's new leaders are more reasonable than their predecessors, the return of men such as Taeb suggests otherwise.

One political journalist from Tehran, who asked to be identified as Maryam, told The Times: "Taeb wasn't chosen; Taeb is the one who chose. In reality, he selected the supreme leader. He is a repressive, dogmatic person, anti-development and anti-freedom and democracy. The IRGC's crackdowns had become calmer and they stepped back a bit, but now it is expected that the crackdowns will intensify."

Memarian said: "Putting a veteran intelligence chief in charge of the Basij suggests that Tehran increasingly sees the foreign battlefield and the domestic street as two fronts of the same security challenge."

Taeb's return to power suggests Iran's new leadership is preparing its answer: more missiles abroad, and more surveillance and repression at home.

Meloni's hard-right rival laments lack of 'strong men'

Italy
Tom Kington Rome

The rising star of hard-right politics in Italy, Roberto Vannacci, has lurched further to the right by praising the role of "strong men" in society as he challenges Giorgia Meloni, the country's first female prime minister.

Now polling at 7 per cent and threatening Meloni's chances of re-election next year, Vannacci upped the stakes this week with the release of his first manifesto in which he praises a concept he calls "Mediterranean patriarchy".

In his ideal Italy, he explains, there must be room for "strong men who are able to control their emotions and passions and protect women".

Giuseppe Barboni, who campaigns for Vannacci, told The Times: "This is about the southern man who defends his woman with his life."

The former special forces general has already tried to move to the right of Meloni on migration. Rather than just keeping them out, Vannacci has called for "remigration" — pushing migrants already in Italy to leave.

That encouraged 100,000 to sign up to his new National Future party and pushed Meloni to ramp up her anti-migrant rhetoric in response. While much of Europe offered Spain support when migrants poured into Ceuta last month, Meloni suspended Italy's open border deal with Madrid as punishment.

But as Vannacci, 57, ventures into a very macho version of sexual politics, he is clearly targeting Meloni and forcing her to take him on, according to Filippo Sensi, a senator with the centre left opposition Democratic Party. "As a man, Vannacci feels he is more authentic as a leader of the right," he said.

Meloni begged to differ this week, claiming she could raise her nine-year-old daughter while running the country, and showed up at summits with her daughter to prove it. "If that sends a message to a girl that she does not need to choose between being a mother and having a career, I am happy," Meloni told Chi magazine.

In his manifesto, Vannacci, who has posted a string of AI-generated images of himself dressed as a solider online, instead stuck up for a male-run society, alleging that when the "patriarchy" is overturned and gender equality prevails, violence against women actually increases as men no longer feel the need to protect women.

Italy experienced less violence against women than Scandinavia, where feminism dominates, he said.

He was challenged by Elisa Ercoli, the head of the Italian charity Differenza Donna, which runs a helpline for female victims of violence. "Sweden has more recorded gender violence because women report it in the belief they can get help. In Italy, only 10 per cent of violence is reported," she said.

Roberto Vannacci, a former general, has moved to the right of Giorgia Meloni, below, on immigration

"Vannacci is trying to appeal to the young male fans of the 'manosphere' and dismantle rights for women guaranteed by the Italian constitution," she added.

After fighting in Afghanistan, Somalia and Iraq, Vannacci became a celebrity when his anti-woke book *The World Upside Down*, in which he praised the right to "hate, and to disrespect", became a bestseller in 2023. That earned him an invitation to join the League party — a partner in Meloni's coalition — by the party's boss Matteo Salvini, who hoped that Vannacci would boost his own hard right, populist appeal, only for Vannacci to go solo this year and overtake Salvini in the polls.

"Salvini is on 6 per cent, Vannacci is on 7, of which 3 per cent are voters who formerly backed Meloni's government and the remainder are people further to the right who have not voted recently, as well as some former Five Star party voters," the pollster Antonio Noto said.

Meloni's Brothers of Italy party holds a commanding 26 per cent in the polls, but may struggle to reach a majority at elections expected as early as next spring, thanks to Vannacci stealing votes.

Meloni may yet seek to bring Vannacci on board her coalition, but sparks will fly over a law she keenly backed last year which beefed up sentencing for men — often spurned partners — who are found guilty of murdering women. Vowing to overturn the law in his manifesto, the ex-general argued the law was unjust. "Who will explain to the parents of a murdered son that his life is worth less than a daughter?" he wrote. "If a woman with lesbian leanings kills a heterosexual woman because she turned her down, is that femicide?"

Vannacci claimed that 25 per cent of femicides in Italy were carried out by foreigners, who only make up 9 per cent of the population. "Therefore, whoever wants to save the life of women should back remigration," he wrote.

Valentina Ghio, a senior MP with the Democratic Party, called Vannacci's arguments "delirious and irresponsible", adding, "We are averaging 100 femicides a year and we need education heading in the opposite direction to what Vannacci is talking about."

She added: "What he says goes against decades of struggle by women to create equality. During Italy's fascist years women were expected to run the family, protected by men, and Vannacci is talking to the gut of voters who believe in that kind of male dominance. If it wasn't so serious, it would be a ridiculous joke."

German spies licensed to retaliate

Germany
Oliver Moody Berlin

Berlin's spy agencies will be granted permission to retaliate against foreign cyberattacks and disrupt weapons production in hostile states in the largest expansion of their powers this century.

The intelligence reform approved by the cabinet yesterday has been long in the making but will be put to a parliamentary vote in the shadow of a suspected Russian drone attack on Leipzig airport, which is thought to be part of a campaign of "daily" hybrid aggression against the country.

The German Foreign Intelligence Service (BND), which is roughly equivalent to MI6, and its domestic sister agency, the BfV, have long complained that tight legal restrictions leave them unable to match peers from other big European countries.

The centrepiece of the legislation is authorisation for "hackbacks", or retaliatory cyberattacks. Until recently these were regarded with trepidation.

It is expected to be passed by the Bundestag next month. Once it comes into force, the BND's IT specialists will be able to go on the offensive when there is deemed to be an "immediate danger to a particularly important legally protected interest".

They will have permission to change or delete the data of hostile government agencies, up to and including attempts to shut down their computer systems or block their financial transactions.

The bill also provides for other "active measures" on foreign territory, such as using field officers or agents to disable the weapons of hostile states or sabotage their production.

After Germany's postwar settlement the agencies had traditionally been confined to an "observer" role, limiting themselves to gathering intelligence and leaving active intervention to the police, military and public prosecutors.

German ministers and intelligence figures argue that the new step is necessary to ensure that the BND can be a capable partner to allied spy agencies that are not hampered by anything like the same level of red tape.

Alexander Dobrindt, the interior minister, said it would finally give Germany "true secret services".

Some civil rights groups are queasy about the expanded remit, partly because it blurs the distinction between the responsibilities of the domestic and foreign services, giving the BND a mandate to surveil some targets in Germany.

The Left party and the hard-right Alternative for Germany have warned that the reform may compromise German citizens' fundamental rights, particularly since the agencies will be allowed to obtain and store more data, and use certain AI tools to process it.

World

Botched road projects ruin Modi's hopes of a fast track

India
Amrit Dhillon Delhi

They say the workmen desperately trying to repair miles of freshly laid tarmac used by boy-racers to get from Dehradun to Delhi cut a few corners themselves. Instead of using gas turbines to dry the new road surface after a monsoon, builders turned to fans designed to freshen up a Delhi drawing room which offered a demonstration that, in India, cheap work tends to cost more.

With crushing inevitability the road collapsed, leaving potholes so wide they threatened to swallow cars whole, three months after the road had been built.

It was a case of "another day, another infrastructure disaster" for Narendra Modi's emerging economic superpower, which is building fast, building tall and, often, botching it. Yet the Dehradun-to-Delhi disaster made headlines even among jaded Indians well used to infrastructure projects going catastrophically wrong.

The road had been inaugurated in April with garlands, flags and speeches from Modi, a prime minister who likes to make a show of his country's boom. Estimates suggest it cost about £5,185 per metre — even before large stretches had to be relaid last month.

Last year, at a new airport terminal in Delhi, the canopy and roof collapsed during heavy rain, killing an Uber driver who had parked underneath.

A bridge collapses into the Ganges in Bhagalpur, one of many to have failed

At Lucknow's new airport, buckets were used to deal with a leaking roof. Then there were the canopies of Rajkot airport in Gujarat and Jabalpur airport in Madhya Pradesh, which both collapsed in 2024 during rain.

Perhaps the most obvious sign of the infrastructure problems is bridges. While China and other Asian economic powers build the longest and safest bridges, taming geography and demonstrating engineering excellence, Modi's tend to fall down. Last year at least 20 people died when a portion of the existing Gambhira Bridge collapsed into the Mahi river in Gujarat.

A flyover in Aishbagh, Bhopal, became a viral sensation, dubbed a "Pythagorean masterpiece" for its 90-degree turn. The Newslaundry news portal calculated that between 2021 and last year as many as 170 bridges collapsed across India, causing 200 deaths.

Work underground fares little better. Before the G20 summit in Delhi in 2023 an underpass was built to ease the traffic flow but it turned into a swimming pool 11 weeks after completion.

The opposition Congress Party said infrastructure was collapsing across India because of "rampant corruption and embezzlement". Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) stormed to power in 2014 helped by public fury over the endless corruption scandals that dogged Congress in government.

Voters pinned their hopes on Modi's promise of a clean government. He said when elected: "I will not accept bribes, nor will I let anyone else accept them."

There is "nothing new about corruption", according to Ashutosh Varshney, the director of the Centre for Contemporary South Asia at Brown University in the United States. "The Congress was also bad," he said. "But it's the scale of the corruption now that is significant, particularly when the BJP pledged there would be no corruption."

Modi's government has built infrastructure at an unprecedented pace. National highways have expanded by 60 per cent; metro lines have expanded fourfold; airports have more than doubled, from 74 to 164.

But with a constant catalogue of potholed new roads, collapsing bridges and falling airport roofs, critics have accused Delhi of rushing deadlines and compromising on quality in its eagerness to churn out images of shiny new projects with which to impress voters.

A favourite boast of Nitin Gadkari, the roads minister, is to say that India's highways will be comparable to America's. Yet when a section of road leading to a new bridge over the Tons river in Dehradun, in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand, collapsed 16 days after completion on July 28, Pushkar Singh Dhami, the state's chief minister, dismissively told reporters: "Yes, I know about it. Repairs are under way."

A recent editorial in the Hindustan Times condemned the "shoddy execution" of projects delivering "third world roads at first world rates".

Some political analysts say the disintegrating infrastructure is damaging the BJP. Varshney senses a greater willingness to talk about corruption, intensified by the scandal at the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Millions of ordinary and poor Hindu devotees gave small donations towards the construction and it was inaugurated by Modi in 2024.

In June it emerged that tens of millions of rupees, plus gold and silver, had been embezzled. A whistleblower forced the BJP government to arrest temple officials and start an inquiry.

Varshney said the "climate of fear" that stifled criticism has been smashed by the youth-led Cockroach Janata Party. Its irreverent mockery of the BJP and Modi has dented the aura of unquestioned authority around the party. "The dam has broken," Varshney said. "A flood has been unleashed thanks to the cockroach protests and now we will see more criticism."

PINKFONG

Park Geon-roung is now 17 and wants a solo career more than a decade after appearing in the Pinkfong video for Baby Shark, below

Baby Shark boy back for a grown-up singalong

By one metric, Park Geon-roung is already bigger than Ed Sheeran, Taylor Swift, BTS and the Beatles (Joshua Thurston writes). His earworm hit has had more than 17.2 billion views on YouTube, making it the most-watched video of all time. Now, as he comes of age, "Baby Shark Boy" is pursuing a solo music career.

Pinkfong, the South Korean company behind the video — which has, for a decade, proved irresistible to young children and driven parents mad — announced on Monday that Park would release his first single next week.

The Korean-language track, *Wave* by Baby Shark Boy, has lyrics which he is said to have co-written, and features performed actions in front of an animated shark family and sung the repetitive "doo doo doo doo doo doo".

"Ten years ago I was dancing next to Baby Shark. Now, I wanted to share my own voice and a story I wrote myself. I'm happy to start something new with the people who've remembered me all this time, and I want to keep showing how I grow from here."

Some say that *Baby Shark* owes a huge part of its success to the global appeal of K-pop more generally. It was released four years after another infectious earworm, Psy's *Gangnam Style*, and was buoyed by popular groups like Twice and Blackpink performing the dance on stage and social media.

Founded in 2010, Pinkfong has pumped out more than 4,000 other children's videos and songs, as well as toys and merchandise. Last year it floated on the South Korean Kosdaq market, valued at 76 billion won (£40.4 million).

Pinkfong said that after the release of Baby Shark Boy's single, a behind-the-scenes documentary "capturing his growth journey alongside *Baby Shark*" would be released.

"Baby Shark Boy is a figure who has shared special memories with fans around the world," Pinkfong said. "This project is meaningful not only for bringing back the boy from the videos but also for him to tell his own story."

The girl who starred alongside Park in *Baby Shark Dance*, Elaine Kim Johnston, is based in New Zealand with her family and has not started a music career.

Joohoney, 31, of the K-pop group Monsta X.

"I've always been grateful that people still remember a video I appeared in as a kid," Park, 17, said, referring to the *Baby Shark Dance* clip in which he

PM's melons 'joke' row referred to police

Australia
Roger Maynard Sydney

Australia's prime minister is under more pressure to apologise for comments and gestures he made about a gift of melons from his Japanese counterpart.

Anthony Albanese made the remarks about the official gift from Sanae Takaichi during a podcast interview last month but has refused to express regret, saying Tokyo did not take offence.

Albanese, 63, faced renewed questions in parliament yesterday over the interview in which he gestured with his hands in front of his chest while describing the melons as "interesting". "She brought two," he added.

Opposition politicians accused the Labor government of leaking a private Japanese diplomatic cable in an attempt to contain the furore, and referred the matter to police.

James Paterson, a Liberal Party senator alleged the message, which noted the "sensationalised reporting" but concluded there had been no ill intention, had been released to journalists to try to "exonerate the prime minister".

He and Ted O'Brien, shadow foreign affairs minister, had written to the federal police asking "that there be an investigation into the apparent unlawful disclosure of confidential correspondence from the government of Japan".

"This is a serious matter. It is important that our closest allies have confidence that when they share confidential correspondence with us that it will not find its way in the media," he added.

Police confirmed that they had received the letter but would not make any further comment. The government dismissed it as a "stunt".

Clare O'Neil, the housing minister, accused the Liberals of losing the plot. "Referring podcast comments to the Australian Federal Police, how ridiculous," she said. "This is an absolute stunt and it was from the very beginning," she added.

Angus Taylor, the opposition leader, renewed his attack, demanding that Albanese "man up" and apologise.

Kazuhiro Suzuki, Japan's ambassador to Australia, said it had been informed that Albanese did not make the comments in the way they had been reported, and highlighted the "personal trust relationship between the two leaders".

PATRICK VAN KATWIJK/GETTY IMAGES

Dutch carriage **Princess Amalia of the Netherlands, in green and white, and Dorothee Bär, the German technology minister, wave to the crowd at the opening of the FEI world equestrian championships in Aachen, western Germany. The event, including competitions in dressage, eventing and showjumping, runs until August 23**

Trump loses Leavitt at crucial time

George Grylls Washington

Karoline Leavitt is stepping down as the White House press secretary, depriving President Trump of one of his most combative communicators in the run-up to November's midterms.

Leavitt, 28, announced the "bittersweet" decision to leave after the birth of her second child. "The truth is since returning to the White House after the birth of my daughter, I have felt in my heart that I cannot be the best mom my two young children deserve while devoting the constant time, energy and attention required of the White House press secretary," she said on X.

Leavitt was Trump's spokeswoman during the 2024 presidential campaign before becoming the youngest person appointed to the White House role.

She became known for her pugnacious press conferences, often sparring with journalists such as Kaitlan Collins, CNN's chief White House correspondent, and earning Trump's admiration.

Leavitt has hosted just one press conference since returning from maternity leave after the birth of Viviana in May. She also has a son — Niko, born in July 2024 — with her husband, Nicholas Riccio, 61, a real estate developer.

The departure of Leavitt comes at a time when Republicans are battling to defend their majorities in the House and the Senate in the midterms.

Trump said she would continue as "an influential voice within the Republican Party as we work to defy history and win the midterm elections".

Egg-freezing opens up cracks in Maga

The American right's pro-family credentials have been tested by 36-year-old Democrat's move, writes **Katy Balls**

When Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez took to social media over the weekend to reveal she'd decided to freeze her eggs, the 36-year-old Democrat had a simple plea to those watching: "Don't be weird about this, even though I know all of you will be."

In the days that followed, there has been endless debate about the celebrity congresswoman and her real motives. Is it because she wants to be president? Is it simply to get people talking about her? Or might it have something to do with her separation from her fiancé of more than four years, Riley Roberts?

AOC is no stranger to such attention. She was just 29 when she was elected to Congress, defeating congressman Joe Crowley in the Democratic primary in one of the biggest upsets of the 2018 midterm elections. A Netflix documentary covered her rise. She has become one of the most recognisable faces on the Hill: not just for her social media prowess but her political clout.

She said she shared the video in the hope it would help and inspire others considering the "daunting" hormone treatment required to freeze eggs.

With a single social media clip, she has sparked a lively debate within the Maga movement about motherhood and babies. A negative response to her decision has also alarmed some in the Trump administration, which wants to address low birth rates by encouraging more Americans to have children.

Yet that hasn't stopped right-wing commentators from criticising her. "I'll have kids in [their] 20s by the time I turn 50," said Matt Walsh, a right-wing commentator. "AOC apparently wants to have a toddler at that age. Totally backwards and ridiculous." Laura Loomer, the Trump confidante who herself does not have children, said AOC had "failed as a woman".

Some administration figures have been watching this unfold with alarm. Should a party supposedly devoted to freedom really be criticising the choices women make over their lives? Isn't this all quite pro-family? The president tends to receive lower support and approval ratings from women than from men and there are fears the conservative movement risks alienating those they should be bringing into the tent.

"It's childless cat lady all over again," said one figure close to the administration. It was JD Vance who in 2021 claimed the US was run by Democrats — such as Ocasio-Cortez and Kamala Harris — who were "a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable, too". The backlash — even from conservatives — was quite something and Vance now regards these comments as "one of the dumbest things I ever said".

As Alexa Henning, a Maga consultant, put it: "Conservative men dunking on AOC for freezing her eggs is not a winning message with women voters ... I have many conservative friends who, because they decided to put careers first, froze their eggs and had babies and families later in life."

The view in the Trump administration is that the row is an unhelpful distraction. Katie Miller, the wife of the White House deputy chief of staff Stephen Miller, is usually not one to miss a chance to attack the left, but even she has ridden to AOC's defence. "We have historically low birth rates worldwide," she said. "If one woman wants to preserve her right to have children, which means more than having none — we should celebrate that." Miller, 34, gave birth to her fourth child last month. However she cautioned that "too many women buy into the feminist lie and spend their childbearing years climbing the career ladder".

Others feel this is "classic AOC": setting a trap for the right and seeing them rise to the bait. This is why her allies think she could run for the White House: her ability to set the terms of debate and trigger the right just as Trump does the left. Given the number of women delaying having children, it's an issue the next Republican candidate will need to get on top of by 2028.

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Riley Roberts

Leftwinger defeated after 'cancel Thanksgiving' row

Katy Balls Washington Editor

The Democrats' left-wing insurgency has hit a roadblock after a moderate beat a socialist to be the party's candidate for the governor of Wisconsin.

David Crowley narrowly beat Francesca Hong in the battleground state that President Trump won by fewer than 30,000 votes in 2024.

Hong had held a double-digit lead in the polls but in recent weeks faced negative publicity over historical social media posts claiming that Thanksgiving should be cancelled, the police defunded and the Senate abolished.

David Crowley won by a small margin after re-entering the Wisconsin race

The result was welcomed by establishment Democrats who feared that Hong's candidacy would hit the party's prospects in November's midterms and the 2028 presidential election.

Crowley had dropped out of the race before re-entering in an attempt to stop Hong on the grounds she was too left wing to win in the state and posed a risk for other Democratic candidates.

Crowley's margin of victory was so narrow, at less than 1 percentage point, that Hong could have requested a recount. However, her campaign would have had to pay for it and she declined.

A member of the Democratic Socialists of America, Hong was seen as part of a wave of left-wing insurgents, starting with Zohran Mamdani in New York last year and more recently in primaries in largely blue states against establishment incumbents.

However, her campaign was beset by controversy over her past comments, ranging from claiming that "police exist to uphold white supremacy" to saying her perfect world would be a "world without prisons". Even some progressives such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez had declined to endorse her. Hong had to settle for Ilhan Omar, a Democratic congresswoman and Trump nemesis, as a guest speaker.

Hong tried to keep the focus on affordability, telling The Times last month: "I think democratic socialism is about delivering for working-class people, with solutions that actually help improve lives. It's their dream for healthcare for everyone. Fully funding public schools, universal school meals. These are democratic socialist policies that make a lot of sense to people."

However, her past comments on policing and identity issues dominated the news cycle. As media scrutiny grew, Hong did try to row back on some of the pledges. She said that abolishing the Senate was impractical and pointed out that as governor — if elected — she could not defund the police.

World

No surrender over De Gaulle's retreat

Grandson of wartime leader is fighting plans to sell his former home to the French state, writes **David Chazan**

ALAMY; GETTY IMAGES

La Boisserie, which has become a shrine to Charles de Gaulle, should stay in the family, according to his grandson Pierre, below with his wife

Charles de Gaulle often escaped the clamour of Paris for the tranquillity of Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, a retreat where he went to think. He recovered his serenity, he said, by contemplating "the horizon of the earth or the immensity of the sky".

Today La Boisserie, the village house he bought in 1934, is a national shrine to the wartime leader who spoke for Free France from London before returning to remake the French Republic. It is where the general received news of the declaration of war in 1939, and where he hosted Konrad Adenauer, the West German chancellor, for postwar reconciliation talks in 1958.

Yet it remains faithful to the general's austere cast of mind. Not a grand château, it is rather a stern, ivy-clad family home with modestly decorated rooms, unadorned furniture and a view across the broad Champagne plains.

Nearby rises a huge, 43-metre high Cross of Lorraine, the emblem of the Free French and the Resistance.

La Boisserie has suffered more than its fair share of turmoil.

The collaborationist Vichy regime put it up for sale in 1940 and German troops later occupied, looted and burnt it. After the liberation, De Gaulle rebuilt and enlarged it, adding a hexagonal tower containing his study, where he wrote his memoirs.

Now the house is at the centre of a fresh dispute. The state and the Haute-Marne département have proposed buying and preserving it as a national heritage site, but one of the general's grandsons has spoken out against the plan.

Pierre de Gaulle, 63, a controversial figure who has voiced support for President Putin, insists that La Boisserie should remain in family hands.

He has launched an appeal on social media that echoes the language of the general's famous BBC address to the French people in 1940.

His posts read: "Françaises, Français, help me save the family home of General de Gaulle! The property of my family since 1934, La Boisserie is now threatened by political interests and cravings that are not those my grandfather would have wanted."

Previously de Gaulle, a Geneva-based business consultant, had not publicly opposed the sale of the 14-room house. Since issuing his appeal, in which he solicited donations, he has declined to explain his apparent change of heart and has not responded to requests for comment. The house, he has said, "saw the grandeur of France reborn ... [and] must be handed down to our children from generation to generation".

Pierre, the youngest of the general's four grandsons, owns half of La Boisserie, having bought the quarter share owned by his brother, Charles. The other half is divided between his brothers Yves and Jean, who favour a transfer to public ownership.

Any sale requires a workable agreement by the co-owners. Pierre de Gaulle's opposition risks derailing the transaction.

The state has valued the property at €800,000 with a further €400,000 for its furniture and contents. Private estimates have been far higher, running into several million euros. It has yet to be determined if the public buyer, if there is one, would either be the French state or the Haute-Marne département.

For now, the département manages the site. A combined ticket for La Boisserie, the Charles de Gaulle Memorial and the Cross of Lorraine costs €16.50. The proceeds help to finance the upkeep but the operation reportedly runs at an annual deficit of nearly €200,000.

Visitor numbers have soared since the release in June of a two-part blockbuster film on De Gaulle's wartime exile in London and his leadership of Free France.

Damien, a local visitor, told Le Parisien: "The state, either on its own or together with the département, should be in charge of this home. It is very beautiful and unpretentious, in keeping with what the general was. It is part of the history of our country."

He said de Gaulle's appeal for funds had angered him: "It is out of the question to give a single centime to a man who cultivates pro-Russian connections. If money is needed, a foundation should be created. Then I might give €50 or €100."

Pascal Babouot, the mayor of Colombey-les-Deux-Églises, said he did not understand de Gaulle's volte-face. "I spoke to him on the phone two weeks ago and he asked me for certificates and town planning documents to finalise the sale," Babouot said. "I don't understand why he has appealed for funding. He would have had no trouble finding a wealthy patron to keep the house in the family if that is what the three grandsons had wanted."

The government has begun action to obtain a compulsory listing of La Boisserie as a historic monument. The De Gaulles would retain ownership, but alterations to the property would require the permission of the culture ministry.

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ICE orders electric shock gloves to use in arrests

United States ICE, the immigration enforcement agency, is planning to spend up to $20 million on electric gloves that will allow agents to deliver shocks to detainees. The G.L.O.V.E — Generated Low Output Voltage Emitter — is operated by a switch. Jenn Rolnick Borchetta, of the American Civil Liberties Union, said: "Introducing gloves that can so easily be used to deliver terrible pain in encounters is a recipe for harm to the public." ICE was approached for comment.

Ambassador accused of sex in official residence

France An ambassador is under investigation over allegations that he invited about three dozen women aged 20 to 30 into his official residence for sex. The accusations against Bruno Foucher, 56, the French ambassador to the Central African Republic, date to between January 2024 and this March. Some of the women stayed overnight at his Bangui residence, according to the Canard Enchaîné newspaper. The foreign ministry confirmed that it was investigating.

Trump switched planes after threat from 'missile'

United States President Trump was secretly hurried off Air Force One after someone was seen holding a portable surface-to-air missile launcher near the Nato summit in Turkey, according to two US officials spoken to by The New York Times. Marco Rubio, the secretary of state, stayed on the presidential plane along with other officials and journalists while Trump was smuggled in a catering truck to a separate aircraft to fly to Britain from Ankara on July 8.

Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

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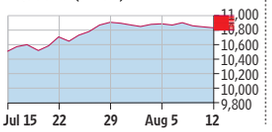

Dow Jones
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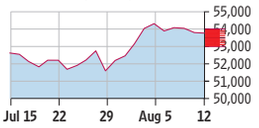

COMMODITIES

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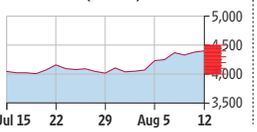

Brent crude (6pm)
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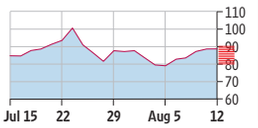

CURRENCIES

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£/€
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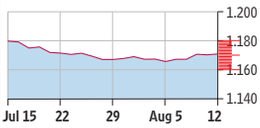

Tata chairman Chandra resigns after row with head of family trusts

Robert Lea, Martin Strydom

One of the most powerful men in British industry, the boss of Jaguar Land Rover and the Port Talbot steelworks, has lost his job in the midst of an apparent power struggle at the sprawling Indian conglomerate Tata Sons.

Natarajan Chandrasekaran, 63, has resigned as chairman in a stand-off with Noel Tata, 68, the half-brother of Ratan Tata who made the family business into one of the powerhouses of British industry.

As chairman of JLR, Britain's largest automotive employer, and Tata Steel, the UK's biggest steelmaker and one of the country's key strategic industrial assets, Chandra, as he is known in India, has been as important to the British economy as the bosses of BAE Systems or Rolls-Royce.

Chandra, a 40-year veteran of the Tata empire, had failed to gain the unanimous support of the main board after a meeting in February. It became apparent that Noel Tata, who heads the family trusts which control the group, was standing in the way of Chandra's reappointment to a job he was first handed more than nine years ago.

He became chairman of Tata Sons after the removal of his predecessor, Cyrus Mistry. Chandra's leadership has come under scrutiny, not least after an Air India flight from Ahmedabad to London crashed last year, killing 260 people. The airline is one of the jewels in the Tata group's crown.

JLR suffered a crisis in the past year. A commercially debilitating cyber-attack on the maker of Range Rover cars halted production for nearly two months at its UK plants, a reverse that had so much impact across the company and its supply chains that it slowed Britain's GDP and left the business in need of a government-backed loan guarantee.

That came as JLR's transition to recreating the Jaguar marque as an all-electric luxury car business stalled amid the lampooning of its designs and a lack of demand for zero-emission

Continued on page 38

Morrisons' private equity debt at £7.5bn

Rising lease liabilities weigh on supermarket

Isabella Fish, Guy Taylor

The debt facing Morrisons has risen sharply after the supermarket chain was left with fresh lease liabilities following its private equity takeover.

Net debt at Market Topco, the parent company of Wm Morrison Supermarkets, widened to £7.52 billion in the year to the end of October, up from £7.07 billion the previous year, as rising lease liabilities weighed on its balance sheet.

Total lease obligations at the grocer, which has 497 supermarkets and 1,700 convenience stores, rose to £1.97 billion from £1.75 billion over the period.

Morrisons said the increase "primarily reflected investment in the future growth of the business, specifically in our vehicle fleet and the addition of 39 new stores in the Channel Islands",

It was also driven in part by a "small" sale-and-leaseback transaction that related to a "handful" of stores and had not been publicly announced.

The grocer, which is in a turnaround under chief executive Rami Baitiéh, has executed several sale-and-leaseback transactions to unlock capital and drive down debts. New filings showed £23 million in profit was made from sale and lease-back-deals last year.

But a spokesman added: "We did not undertake a significant number of sale-and-leaseback transactions during the year and our supermarket estate remains over 80 per cent freehold, among the highest in the sector."

Once one of the UK's top four grocery groups with an enterprise value of over £9 billion, Morrisons' financial standing unravelled after a heavily debt-laden private equity takeover. The grocer was bought by Clayton Dubilier & Rice, the US private equity group, in 2021 in a deal that added £6.6 billion of debt to its balance sheet. Before that, it had net debt obligations of about £3.2 billion. In late 2021, after the takeover, Morrisons' parent company reached a peak net debt level of about £8.5 billion.

As a result, the supermarket has been unable to price-match key rivals during a period of inflation, leaving it vulnerable to rapid erosion of its market share.

Market Topco's net debt rose last year as preference share liabilities rose to £2 billion from £1.79 billion. Preference shares act as high-interest IOUs issued to CD&R, locking in a fixed annual return that compounds over time.

Losses before tax from continuing operations before exceptions rose to £629 million, up from £612 million the year before. This reflected exceptional costs, "primarily non-cash impairment charges, with a significant factor being the writedown in the value of the acquired McColl's business." A decision to close a number of loss-making former McColl's stores was made.

Revenue rose to £15.77 billion from £15.23 billion, while group like-for-like sales increased by 2.8 per cent.

Underlying earnings (Ebitda) from continuing operations, the company's preferred metric, was flat at £835 million. The grocer said this was despite "cost headwinds from the 2024 budget [which represent an annualised cost of £200 million], the impact of a cyberincident in the first quarter and higher than expected inflation".

Group like-for-like sales rose 2.2 per cent in the three months to the end of April, down from 2.8 per cent growth reported in the first quarter of the year.

A Morrisons spokesman said: "The underlying performance was robust in the year, with the company continuing to generate healthy underlying Ebitda and strong operating cashflow."

DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES

Label's new leaf Boden, a fashion favourite of the Princess of Wales, is targeting Canada as its next market. The brand founded by Johnnie Boden, above, alongside Trinny Woodall, said it planned the move after US growth

US inflation fall eases load for Fed

Jack Barnett

American inflation edged lower over the past month, making it more likely that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates on hold in September.

The consumer price index figure was at an annual rate of 3.4 per cent in the year to July, down from 3.5 per cent in June, figures released yesterday by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics showed.

The data suggested that at its next meeting on September 16, the Fed will keep the cost of borrowing in the current range of 3.5 to 3.75 per cent , where it has been since December. After the release of the inflation data, nearly 58 per cent of traders were betting on no movement in rates, while 42.1 per cent reckoned on a quarter-point rise, according to CME's FedWatch tool.

Analysts had expected an annual inflation reading of 3.4 per cent in July. Over the month, prices rose by 0.1 per cent, also in line with forecasts and up from a 0.4 per cent decline in the monthly inflation rate in June.

The yield on the benchmark ten-year US government bond fell by 0.04 percentage points to 4.65 per cent in response to the expected decline in inflation, while the dollar index, which measures the greenback against six comparable currencies, fell by 0.09 per cent. Wall Street opened higher following the inflation numbers.

"The prospect of a September hike – as we've been forecasting – now rests firmly on the August CPI and PPI data in the days before that meeting", Stephen Brown, chief North America economist at Capital Economics, said. Pantheon Macroeconomics said the inflation data was "good enough for the [Fed] to do nothing in September".

Statistics published last week showed that the American economy unexpectedly shed 23,000 jobs in July, prompting traders to scale back their expectations for rate rises this year despite the war in the Middle East sending prices sharply higher. The Fed's preferred measure of inflation — the personal consumption expenditures (PCE) index — is released on August 26.

Need to know

1 The debt facing Morrisons has risen sharply after the supermarket chain was left with fresh lease liabilities following its private equity takeover. Net debt at Market Topco, its parent company, widened to £7.52 billion in the year to the end of October, up from £7.07 billion a year earlier. Page 35

2 One of the most powerful men in British industry, the boss of Jaguar Land Rover and the Port Talbot steelworks, has lost his job in the midst of an apparent power struggle at the sprawling Indian conglomerate Tata Sons. Natarajan Chandrasekaran, 63, resigned as chairman in a stand-off with Noel Tata, 68, the half-brother of Ratan Tata. Page 35

3 American inflation edged lower over the past month, making it more likely that the Federal Reserve will keep interest rates on hold in September. The consumer price index figure was at an annual rate of 3.4 per cent in the year to July, down from 3.5 per cent in June. Page 35

4 As many as 90,000 bankers, lawyers and accountants based in London are forecast to have their jobs moved to other parts of the country over the next five years amid Andy Burnham's devolution drive. Page 38

5 Estate agents are fearful that renewed speculation about potential changes to property taxes will see them miss out, once again, on the usual autumn bounce in the housing market. New buyer inquiries, sales and house prices fell again in the past month. Page 40

6 Cautious holidaymakers unsettled by the conflict in the Middle East have led Tui, Europe's largest travel company, to report a larger-than-expected fall in third-quarter profit. Page 41

7 Demand for US data centres and the transition of Britain's energy infrastructure has sent profits and orders surging at Balfour Beatty, and pushed its shares to a record high. The rise in the construction company's stock raised the prospect of its re-entry to the FTSE 100. Page 42

"Essays from tech leaders should be read in the context of monopoly wars in the AI race

Louisa Clarence-Smith, page 39

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How ASML became Europe's

A breakthrough by the Dutch company put it ahead in the race for more powerful chips, **James Ashton** writes

As one of Europe's largest cargo airports, Amsterdam's Schiphol is expert at handling a variety of precious goods, including organs for donor transplants, emergency food supplies for disaster response and fresh-cut blooms sold at the nearby Aalsmeer flower auction.

It also regularly handles a giant but delicate item disassembled into 150 crates and loaded on to three Boeing 747s that are equipped with vibration isolation technology to prevent knocks, a temperature control system that maintains a steady 20C, and a flow of nitrogen piped into the inner packaging to preserve cleanliness.

This is no ancient heirloom, but something at the forefront of modern technology, in hot demand in America and Asia. And producing these machines has made ASML, based in Veldhoven in the Netherlands, into Europe's most valuable listed company.

Its closest rival for that title, the French fashion house LVMH, is used to driving consumer excitement for its must-have handbags and watches from Christian Dior or Fendi. Yet its luxuries have nothing to match the clamour for ASML's lithography machines, the tools behind the AI boom.

The company's top-of-the-range extreme ultraviolet (EUV) device is the size of a small bus, with 100,000 precision components and 2km of cabling. It was developed over more than 20 years at a cost in excess of €10 billion. And, almost a decade after entering commercial production, ASML will pull out all the stops to make 65 of them this year without any competition in sight.

These $200 million machines project intricate designs on to silicon wafers about twice the width of a human DNA strand. The wafers are then developed like a photographic film with chemicals that etch into place the pattern of conductors and insulators required to connect and isolate billions of transistors.

The process is repeated, on the same wafer, up to 100 times, before they are carefully sliced up into chips and installed in giant data centres.

Even after a summer share slide on fears that the ferocious AI spending boom could turn to bust, at $700 billion, ASML is still worth more than twice what it was a year ago.

"Our customers are getting long-term agreements with their own customers, which really invites them to commit for the long term," its chief executive, Christophe Fouquet, said. He added that this gave purchasers "a quite unprecedented visibility on what will happen to the market".

The 2027 order book for EUV machines is just about full, with a large number of orders placed for 2028, too. In response, ASML is expanding capacity by 30 per cent next year, and perhaps the same again the year after.

To understand how the company got here requires rewinding to 1984. In the same year that Steve Jobs proudly unveiled Apple's Macintosh computer and Steve Furber and Sophie Wilson pondered what would become the first Arm chip design, ASML — which stands for Advanced Semiconductor Materials Lithography until it was no longer spelt out — began life as a joint venture between two Dutch companies.

The lesser known, ASMI, was Europe's first major supplier of chip-making equipment to Intel, Motorola and others, including kit that deposited thin chemical films on the silicon wafer during the manufacturing process.

Philips, the famous electronics giant that traced its roots back to 1891, had developed a "stepper", the shorthand name for a step-and-repeat camera that evolved into a lithography machine. It was for internal use at its microchip factory in Nijmegen near the German border, at the time Europe's largest facility of its kind.

To supply the wider industry, Philips recognised that its steppers must be placed into an arm's-length company. Fifty scientists were assigned to the task, set up in a wooden shed on its site in Eindhoven before later moving down the road to Veldhoven.

The fearsome cost of development meant ASMI withdrew and the market for lithography tool suppliers thinned to a three-way battle with two Japanese firms better known for their expertise in cameras — Canon and Nikon.

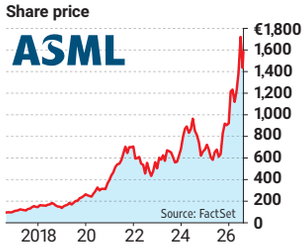
ASML's breakthrough came in the early 1990s when its PAS 5500 machine became the first stepper to reliably produce — using larger, eight-inch silicon wafers — precisely what microchip makers such as IBM had called for.

In pursuit of better machines producing more powerful chips at ever-smaller scale and more efficiently, an industry known for cut-throat competition eventually aligned behind their best chance of driving progress. From using mercury vapour lamps as their light source, the dream was to extend the life of Moore's law (the idea that perform-

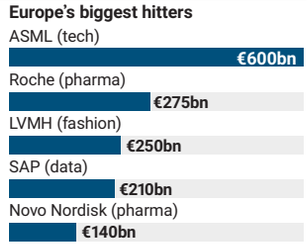
Christophe Fouquet, ASML's chief executive , at the company's HQ in Veldhoven,

Chipping in

Share price



Europe's biggest hitters



Good vibes at app builder Lovable

Isabella Fish Retail Editor

A platform that lets users build apps and software using plain English has doubled its valuation to $13.3 billion amid a growing wave of enthusiasm for AI-powered coding tools.

Lovable, Europe's leading "vibe coding" platform, said yesterday that it had raised $400 million in a Series C funding round led by the venture capital companies Menlo Ventures and Scaleup Europe Fund, which is managed by EQT.

New investors included Balderton Capital and Carmignac from Europe, Tencent and World Innovation Lab from Asia, and Regent from the United States.

Lovable is owned by its co-founders, Anton Osika, the chief executive, and Fabian Hedin, the chief technology officer, who created the Stockholm-based software company in 2023.

The platform offers software that allows users to create applications using simple prompts, a process known as vibe-coding. The company was valued at $6.6 billion at its previous funding round in December.

It said its annual recurring revenue surpassed $500 million in June, up from $400 million in March.

Osika said in June that there was "naturally a lot of interest in the real economic impact we're seeing across the world". The goal was to create a $100 billion company based in Sweden.

Coined by the AI pioneer Andrej Karpathy, the term "vibe coding" describes a workflow where humans guide the "vibes" and architecture of an application while AI handles the actual execution. What started as a viral tech concept has quickly ballooned into a multibillion-dollar market driven by specialised developer tools and full-stack deployment platforms.

Popular platforms such as Replit, Cursor, and Lovable allow non-technical founders and developers alike to generate full-stack applications instantly. The rapid rise of companies like Lovable has contributed to investor unease about the future of established software companies.

Since the start of the year, trillions of dollars have been knocked off the market capitalisation of software companies around the world, a sell-off that analysts have called the "SaaSpocalypse", referring to software-as-a-service (SaaS).

More than 60 million projects have been created around the world since Lovable was launched.

Cisco rides the AI profits wave

Cisco Systems' forecast revenue for the financial year 2027 above Wall Street expectations last night, signalling confidence that strong demand for its artificial intelligence networking equipment will continue to power growth.

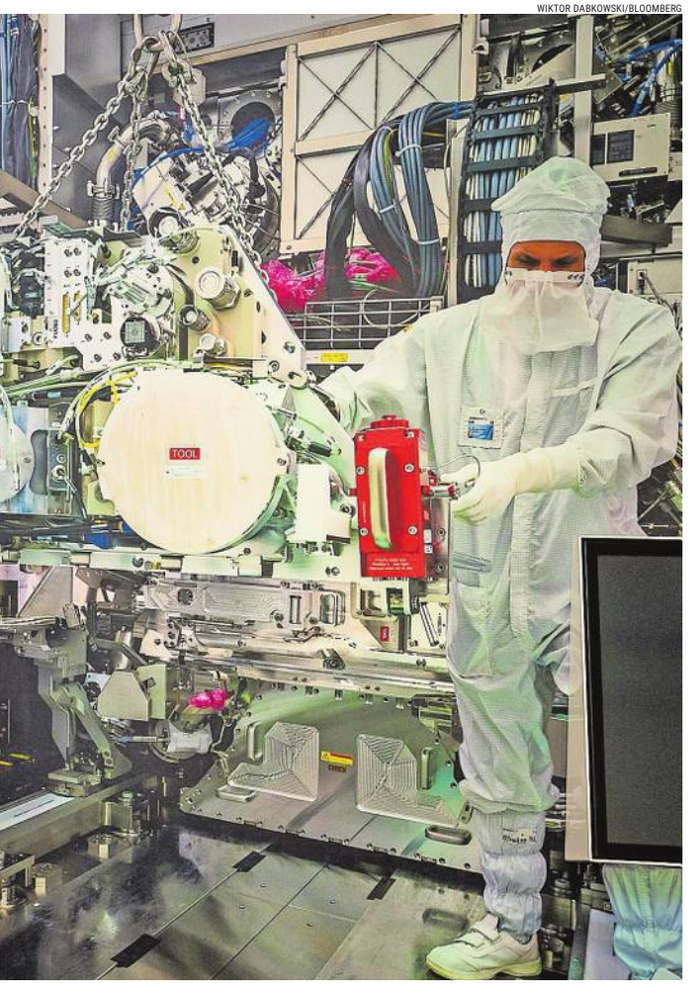
The California-based tech company expects annual revenue of between $72.2 billion and $73.4 billion, compared with analysts' average estimate of $68.69 billion.

In the fourth quarter, Cisco reported revenue of $17.3 billion and net income of $3.9 billion. Total revenue for 2026 was $63.3 billion, an increase of 12 per cent, while annual net income was $13.3 billion, a rise of 30 per cent.

The shares were $3.24, or 2.5 per cent, lower at $121.32 in after-hours trading, valuing the business at $2.5 trillion.

most valuable firm

WIKTOR DABKOWSKI/BLOOMBERG



Netherlands, said that the 2027 order book for EUV machines is just about full

ance doubles every couple of years) by building transistors smaller than could be achieved with visible light.

To do so has involved huge resources. ASML has come back from the brink of bankruptcy several times, and, as recently as 2012, appealed to expectant industry players, including Intel, TSMC and Samsung, to contribute billions of dollars in a final push to get the EUV standard over the line.

Long before the US-China "chip choke", there were also national sensitivities to navigate. EUV is built on Russian mirror research from the 1970s, imagery first projected in the research department of Japan's Nippon Telegraph and Telephone Corporation in the 1980s and laboratories supported by the US Department of Energy, which struck an agreement with a commercial consortium in the 1990s. With recollections of the US-Japan memory-chip wars still fresh, the US Congress favoured ASML over its two competitors.

Even that did not guarantee easy passage for ASML's $1.6 billion acquisition in 2000 of Silicon Valley Group — the last vestiges of the US lithography industry. "I've never been exposed to that level of geopolitical influence and rhetoric, but we never opted to walk away because we recognised that over the years the gain would be tremendous," Doug Dunn, ASML's chief executive at the time, said.

How EUV works today reads like a passage from a science-fiction novel. ASML, like Boeing, plays the role of systems integrator, managing 5,100 specialist suppliers. Capitalising on their collective expertise, it has devised its own light source, with a wavelength of 13.5 nanometers, so it can shrink the size and increase the density of a chip's features. The system heats droplets of molten tin with a carbon dioxide laser to a temperature 100 times greater than the surface of the Sun.

Some 50,000 droplets are generated per second; each must be blasted twice by the laser in quick succession. The resulting plasma, a gas of ions and free electrons, emits EUV radiation that is bounced between six of the world's smoothest mirrors which, if enlarged to the size of Germany, would not have a bump higher than a millimetre.

For its grand finale, the beam hits the silicon wafer with the precision equivalent to shooting an arrow from Earth to hit an apple placed on the Moon.

No wonder China is eager to deploy such technology — and the US is eager for it not to. In its ongoing efforts to restrict Chinese access to leading-edge intellectual property, a planned EUV sale to a Chinese customer did not go through in 2018, reportedly after the Dutch prime minister at the time, Mark Rutte, paid a visit to the White House.

Such transactions are still banned, although China accounts for 20 per cent of ASML's sales because it is permitted to sell older models into that market.

It is a potential sales channel that is closely monitored. The US commerce secretary, Howard Lutnick, caused a stir recently, warning that one of the company's EUV machines may have reached China, something ASML strongly denied.

The company is striving to stay ahead. Some €4.7 billion was spent on research and development last year, more than twice the expenditure of five years earlier.

Its latest innovation, a High NA (numerical aperture) EUV tool, has gone into volume manufacturing at Intel's facility in Oregon. Intel initially held back on using EUV, losing ground to its Taiwanese rival TSMC.

In this ongoing battle where the smallest of margins matter, it would be foolish to delay a special delivery from the Netherlands' chip champion a second time.

Foxconn profits surge on AI demand

Guy Taylor

A timely expansion from assembling Apple iPhones to building the servers that power artificial intelligence data centres helped to drive Foxconn's profits up by more than a third.

The Taiwan-based tech group said profits between April and June reached T$60 billion ($1.9 billion), up by 35 per cent year-on-year, and ahead of consensus forecasts. Revenue rose by 41 per cent to $78 billion.

The company's stock has risen by about 37 per cent during the past year, lifting its market valuation to about $120 billion. Its latest results added another 2.7 per cent in overnight trading in Asia.

Founded in 1974 by the billionaire businessman and Taiwanese politician Terry Gou and formally called Hon Hai Precision Industry, Foxconn is the world's largest contract electronics maker. Pushing into AI has helped it to diversify away from consumer electronics. It has also become Nvidia's biggest server supplier.

Tech giants are spending hundreds of billions on the infrastructure needed to underpin the AI boom, and Foxconn has emerged as a critical supplier supporting the sector's rapid expansion.

Meanwhile, manufacturers of smartphones and games consoles are being forced to raise prices to compete.

Foxconn said that its cloud and networking division, which encompasses AI servers, contributed more than 50 per cent of the company's revenue for the first time in the second quarter.

Consumer electronics products, which include iPhones, accounted for about 29 per cent.

Michael Chiang, Foxconn's chief executive, said he expects US cloud providers to continue to fuel the company's revenue growth for the next couple of years.

He also highlighted the steady nature of demand for AI infrastructure, contrasting this to the fluctuating consumer electronics industry.

The company, which does not provide numeric forecasts, maintained guidance for the 2026 financial year due to "strong demand for AI servers and growth in smart consumer electronics."

Most of the iPhones that Foxconn makes for Apple are assembled in China, but it now produces the bulk of those sold in the US in India.

The company is also building factories in Mexico and Texas to make AI servers for Nvidia.

Help to Buy isn't a bad idea, Andy

BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Mention Help to Buy and people typically say two things. First, Jeff Fairburn: the former Persimmon boss of £76 million bonus fame. Second, that all the policy ever did was jack up house prices, so doing over the first-time buyers it was meant to be helping — even if there's no real evidence that it did.

So, you can understand, politically, why the word from Andy Burnham's new regime is that "there are no plans" for a rerun of Help to Buy. As conventional thinking goes, Britain's key problem is a chronic supply shortage. So what use is it bringing in a measure that pumps up demand, with the added risk that chancers like Fairburn come along to abuse it?

It has a theoretical logic, too. But this argument also has one big flaw. Back in the real world, it's wrong — as Labour is discovering with its fantasy target of getting 1.5 million homes built this parliament. Indeed, at the present run rate, it may even struggle to get to a million.

The former PM and chancellor correctly spotted that planning was an obstacle to more houses. But they failed to grasp another issue: that, like it or not, Britain is reliant on private housebuilders; that they'll only build what they can sell at a profit; that, if there's no demand they won't build; and that the biggest driver of demand is first-time buyers. In fact, true to form, Rachel Reeves did her idiotic best to kill off demand by using her first budget to cut the purchase price at which first-timers must pay stamp duty from £425,000 to £300,000.

Lob in rising mortgage rates due to the Iran war and the recent message from industry chiefs is clear. Persimmon's Dean Finch saw "affordability constraints". Barratt Redrow's David Thomas pointed to "subdued customer demand". Taylor Wimpey's Jennie Daly flagged "stretched" affordability, adding that: "Housebuilding drives growth, jobs and opportunity across the UK, and getting first-time buyers onto the housing ladder is essential for a functioning housing market". As for Bellway's Jason Honeyman, he's just called for a reversal of Reeves's stamp duty howler and a "deposit support scheme to help young people". Sure, cynics could dismiss all this as an industry talking its book. But, faced with sluggish demand, it's lately been preserving cash rather than ramping up the newbuilds. The upshot? The societal damage from young people not getting onto the housing ladder keeps racking up: intergenerational inequality, a lack of labour mobility, official stats showing the average age of a first-time buyer is now 34.

Hence, the key question: is it time to bring back some sort of Help to Buy, only a better built version? For starters, the old one wasn't as bad as billed, at least on figures from Homes England. They show that the scheme, running between 2013 and 2022, helped 387,278 buyers to purchase a home and has so far delivered a £1.74 billion profit, including interest, to the exchequer. It's hard to think, too, that with Help to Buy accounting for 5 per cent or less of all residential property deals that it really could be the reason for rising prices.

Still, there is room for improvement, as the Home Builders Federation accepts with its own plan for a revamped Help to Buy: one restricted to first-time buyers and with housebuilders having to pay a fee to access it. First timers face a big problem in getting together a 10 per cent deposit: a task off a £32,890 general salary that, on HBF maths, would take an average buyer seven years across the UK and as many as 18 in London. Yet, even then, based on a mortgage of 4.5 times salary, there is a vast affordability gap: a UK average of almost £70,000 rising to as much as £275,000 for a buyer in their twenties in London.

Its proposed fix? A government equity loan of 15 per cent, interest free for the first five years, with 1 per cent provided by the housebuilder as a fee for accessing the scheme, rising to 3 per cent as transactions increase. That would cut the buyer's deposit to 5 per cent and shrink the affordability gap, while the taxpayer should end up quids in too. It would get 15 per cent of the value of the property when the loan was paid off, despite sometimes putting up only 12 per cent of the equity.

Maybe Burnham could find ways to spruce up that plan. But he should have a proper look at it: this market clearly needs some help.

Capricorn won

Three-way bunk-ups can be more exciting. So, maybe that was what attracted the boss of Norway's DNO, Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani, to propose a £202 million cash bid for Genel Energy at 69p a share, swiftly rejected by its board, when his target had already made a recommended £271 million offer for Capricorn Energy.

Mossavar-Rahmani knows Genel well. It is DNO's minority partner in the Tawke field in Kurdistan, where Genel's 25 per cent stake is its only operating asset. Yet, the timing of his tilt is notable. When DNO made it last week, he drew attention to two mooted rival bids for Capricorn from Samos Energy and a part of Saudi Arabia's Cafani Group. And, had they outbid Genel, it would have left it with a problem under rule 21.1 of the Takeover Code. Any move by Genel to up its bid could have been construed a "restricted action" to frustrate DNO — even if the panel may have allowed it.

Yes, DNO said its proposed Genel bid was "not conditional" on the Capricorn offer. But was this Mossavar-Rahmani's calculation: that Genel would get outbid for Capricorn, leaving it vulnerable to a DNO takeover just when a restart of exports from the Tawke field made it more of a money-spinner?

If so, it's backfired because the rival Capricorn bidders have pulled out, leaving Genel, trading at 63¼p, obliged to complete its offer. DNO has a trading update today. He may spend quite a long time pretending that he DNO what happens next.

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Business

Devolution 'will cost London jobs'

Tom Howard
Professional Services Correspondent

As many as 90,000 bankers, lawyers and accountants based in London are forecast to have their jobs moved to other parts of the country over the next five years amid Andy Burnham's devolution drive.

The migration of white-collar jobs is estimated to bring with it a £9 billion boost to regional economies such as Leeds, Manchester and Birmingham, according to analysis by Robert Walters, the listed recruitment company.

That figure could rise to £15 billion after factoring in the transplants' spending in their new home towns and the extra work it would bring for local supply chains.

Robert Walters said more companies were looking to move some of their teams out of London because of the spiralling costs of running a business in the capital. A shortage of "prime" office space has pushed up London office rents to record highs.

The forecast relocations also fit in with the devolution ambitions of Burnham, the prime minister, who has promised to deliver "good growth in every postcode".

While the 90,000 jobs represent only a fraction — 2.5 per cent — of London's overall workforce, it demonstrates the wider rewiring of the UK economy.

"Our forecast indicates a rebalancing of the scales towards stronger regional jobs growth over a widespread shift of business activity away from London," Jonny Bohane, of Robert Walters' market intelligence team, said.

The analysis used past job relocations from big UK employers to establish a baseline, then combined Robert Walters' own placement volumes with LinkedIn movement data to create projections of regional hiring demand. The model also analysed office capacity, hybrid working levels, the depth of local talent pools, regional development initiatives and government decentralisation programmes.

By the end of 2027, Robert Walters predicts that up to 12,000 jobs will have moved out of the capital, with the outflow expected to reach 45,000 by 2029. Senior leadership teams are likely to remain in London, and companies are instead expected to bolster junior ranks with "local talent".

Daniel Harris, the UK managing director at Robert Walters, expects the relocation trend will accelerate as "cost considerations remain high, and hybrid working allows organisations to build more geographically diverse teams".

JOSE SARMENTO MATOS/BLOOMBERG

Andy Burnham, seen here with Angela Rayner, promised "good growth in every postcode"

Towns and cities in northwest England, including Manchester and Liverpool, are forecast to be the biggest beneficiaries of the shift, with 22,500 jobs forecast to move there by 2031.

Bohane and his team estimate this could inject up to £2.25 billion into the region's economy by 2031, "reinforcing its status as the UK's second hub for growth and innovation".

About a fifth of all the relocated positions, up to 18,000, could end up in the Midlands, principally Birmingham, the report claimed, which would bring a £1.8 billion economic boost.

Yorkshire stands to attract about 13,500 London leavers, adding £1.35 billion to the local economy.

"Manchester, Leeds and Birmingham are the engine rooms of activity," Harris said. "Over the last decade, these regional centres have become key career destinations for UK white-collar workers. They offer a significant presence of high-profile, multinational employers, vibrant cultural scenes and leisure opportunities, as well as a lower cost of living compared to the capital."

Birmingham, for example, is home to the second-largest UK office of Deloitte, the Big Four accounting firm; Siemens, the German industrial giant, moved its UK headquarters to Manchester from Surrey in 2019; and the Bank of England has pledged to have one-in-ten of its workforce based out of Leeds from 2027.

Of the remaining 36,000 or so jobs that Robert Walters thinks will leave London over the next five years, most are set to relocate to other large regional cities including Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Cambridge, Newcastle, Liverpool, Reading, and Cardiff.

"The appeal of these regional cities shouldn't be underestimated. But growth isn't determined by businesses relocating or creating new jobs alone," Bohane said.

"When professionals move into an area, the benefits ripple through the local economy. Increased demand supports everything from transport and housing to cafés, co-working spaces and the wider network of local businesses that keep these cities running."

The forecasts, if they prove accurate, will be welcomed by Burnham, who wants to reduce the country's reliance on London, which accounts for about a quarter of the UK's economic output, making the UK one of the most fiscally-centralised developed economies.

As part of the prime minister's plans for wider political devolution and regional economic growth, last month he opened a northern branch of Downing Street, No 10 North.

HSBC's global insurance boss to leave

Ben Martin Financial Editor

A senior HSBC executive who runs the bank's insurance business is leaving in the latest shake-up at the FTSE 100 lender.

Edward Moncreiffe spent two decades rising through the ranks but has resigned a little more than two years after being appointed chief executive of its global insurance operations.

His impending exit comes amid a wider shake-up at the bank under its chief executive Georges Elhedery, who has quickly moved to reorganise the sprawling group since taking charge in September 2024.

Elhedery's revamp has encompassed an internal reorganisation that has sharpened focus on its main markets of Hong Kong and the UK, as well as a sweeping simplification that has led to thousands of job losses. Several senior executives have also gone recently, including the head of HSBC's business in the United States.

Elhedery's overhaul has also included a reshaping of its insurance arm, with HSBC last month striking a $2.1 billion deal to sell its life and health insurance operations in Singapore to Allianz.

This followed an agreement by HSBC a year ago to offload its specialist life protection and investment bond business in the UK to Chesnara, an industry consolidator, for £260 million.

Its French life insurance unit was sold to Matmut Société d'Assurance Mutuelle in a €925 million transaction announced at the end of 2024.

The departure of Moncreiffe comes at a time of broader nervousness in the insurance market in Hong Kong, which is where he is based. Shares in HSBC fell sharply a week ago over concerns about a tax crackdown in the former British colony after it emerged that authorities in mainland China were taxing dividends and interest earned from insurance policies offshore.

While based in London, HSBC looks to Asia as its main driver of growth, having built a huge presence in the region after it was founded in Hong Kong 161 years ago.

Like other banks, HSBC has sought to reduce its exposure to volatile interest rates by expanding its fee-based businesses, including insurance, which sits within the group's wealth arm.

HSBC had said when Moncreiffe was appointed to run insurance in April 2024, that "insurance, one of our fastest-growing businesses, is integral to our strategy to become a leading global wealth manager".

A spokesman for the bank declined to comment on Moncreiffe's exit.

Tata chief quits with call for clarity on leadership

Continued from page 35

vehicles that would be priced in excess of £100,000.

Tata Steel's Port Talbot works has arguably been in crisis for a decade and invariably loss-making. Dependent on UK government handouts, it has laid off thousands of workers as it transitions from its polluting and high-energy-use blast-furnace steelmaking to electric arc furnaces.

The origins of the fallout between Chandra and Noel Tata are not immediately clear, though reports indicated that disagreements between the two are the sole reason for his departure.

The annual meeting of Tata Sons is scheduled to take place on August 18.

In reference to the February impasse, Chandra said in a statement: "It has been six months since that board meeting and no resolution has been reached." He added that Tata Sons is a "very large institution and there are many strategic projects" at "critical stages of execution". He added: "It is not only necessary to have a leader in place to lead the group ... but also clarity on leadership is important for employees, investors, partners and other stakeholders."

Chandra, left, resigned after disagreements with Noel Tata

Louisa Clarence-Smith

Don't be fooled by Zuckerberg's stance on artificial intelligence

Mark Zuckerberg, Meta Platforms' shape-shifting chief, has completed his latest profile update in the age of President Trump and advanced AI. The Facebook founder, whom a Wall Street analyst described as acting like a "different CEO" during Trump's second term, with his more rugged appearance and promotion of "masculine energy", this week surprised his followers with an apparent personality change as an anti-monopolist.

In a 6,500-word essay espousing his philosophy on AI, Zuckerberg wrote: "The defining questions of our age are who will have access to superintelligence, and what will we direct it towards. Will it be centralised and restricted to a few institutions, or will it be a tool that empowers everyone?"

While some may interpret this as an earnest plea to the US government to ensure there is fair competition for the dissemination of this new and powerful technology, an alternative reading would be that the essay is a thinly-veiled attack on Meta's upstart rivals OpenAI and Anthropic, the frontier labs that are leading in model capabilities, by suggesting their potential power concentration is problematic. On Monday, Meta released a new "open" AI model that can be downloaded and modified by developers and said more would follow soon, while attacking "closed" models which are promoted by Anthropic and OpenAI.

In a not-so-subtle dig at Dario Amodei, Anthropic's chief executive, who has been the most outspoken of the AI developers about the societal risks of technological advances, Zuckerberg said it was "surprising that the discourse from many developing AI is so filled with doom". With a touch of cattiness, he added: "I do not understand why anyone who believes that AI will eliminate most jobs and much of humanity's relevance would rush to build that future."

But don't be fooled that Zuckerberg has been reborn as an antitrust champion. Statements and essays from US tech leaders should be read in the context of the monopoly wars being played out in the AI race.

America's biggest tech companies have comfortably enjoyed near-monopolies for years. The internet

CARLOS BARRIA/REUTERS

Mark Zuckerberg said that AI should be a tool that "empowers everyone"

revolution transformed the way we live and gave rise to Google, with its dominance over search and search advertising; Meta, the social media giant that owns Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp; and Amazon, the world's biggest online marketplace.

Even as the tech giants were subjected to a series of Biden-era antitrust investigations in the US and Europe, it seemed like nothing could seriously jeopardise their rise. But the arrival of advanced AI has been a humbling experience for them.

AI has levelled the playing field as the technology threatens to upend how we experience technological media. (Alex Heath, a tech journalist who writes the Sources newsletter, said that Zuckerberg called him over the weekend to discuss his essay via his AI-powered Meta Ray-Ban glasses while fishing). Advanced AI will transform the interface between users and providers of technology in ways we cannot yet fully foresee, creating opportunities for new start-ups to replace the incumbents in areas ranging from search and digital communication to enterprise software and online shopping.

Anthropic is the principal target of the nervous tech incumbents. Founded in 2021 by former OpenAI executives, it has since leapfrogged the ChatGPT maker with its Claude agent, widely considered to be the leading tool. Demand from businesses for its coding tools has led to meteoric sales growth, putting it on a path to profitability in the second quarter of the year, according to reports, with projected positive cash flow of $17 billion in 2028 on $70 billion in revenue. There is a fear that, as competition pushes the price of models down, Anthropic will look to grow revenues by disrupting other business models.

A planned mega-IPO this year could also put pressure on the stocks of tech incumbents, as investor frenzy around AI goes into overdrive.

In Silicon Valley lore, competition is for losers. The venture capitalist and early Facebook investor Peter Thiel, in his book, *Zero to One*, published in 2014 and still a bible for aspiring tech entrepreneurs, promoted the concept of monopolies. "Creative monopoly means new products that benefit everybody and sustainable profits for the creator," he said. "Competition means no profits for anybody, no meaningful differentiation, and a struggle for survival."

He also noted in the book how "monopolists lie to protect themselves". He said: "They know that bragging about their great monopoly invites being audited, scrutinised and attacked. Since they very much want their monopoly profits to continue unmolested, they tend to do whatever they can to conceal their monopoly — usually by exaggerating the power of their (non-existent) competition."

So what is the end game for Meta in the age of AI? Already, 3.6 billion people are using at least one of its apps each day. AI algorithms are helping to improve the relevance of content on users' feeds, leading to people spending more time on Meta's platforms.

Meanwhile, Zuckerberg is ploughing hundreds of billions of dollars into AI infrastructure with his stated ambition of dominating the market for personal "superintelligent" AI agents. Or, as he told analysts on an earnings call last month: in five years' time, he predicts that billions of people will have a "personal agent that understands your goals and that is just working on your behalf 24/7 to achieve your goals". He said those goals could be "helping you with your health or your hobbies or your personal finances or your productivity and running your home better or improving and enhancing your relationships, helping with your career, helping like just all these different things".

Zuckerberg wrote in his essay this week that he wanted these personal agents to be delivered for free. However, much like his social media platforms, if adopted by billions of people, they would presumably open up huge revenue opportunities from data collection and targeted advertising.

That sounds like another version of a monopoly to me.

Louisa Clarence-Smith is US Business Editor of The Times

UK 'risks spending a fifth of tax on debts'

Jack Barnett Economics Correspondent

One pound in every £5 of future generations' taxes could be spent on servicing Britain's debts unless more is done to tackle the problems of an ageing population, declining health and sluggish productivity.

A report published today by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) said debt interest could consume just over a fifth of all government tax revenues by the 2070s.

Weak economic growth, negative demographic developments and too much focus on meeting short-term fiscal targets are set to make debt interest one the biggest burdens for future taxpayers, the think tank said.

The report called for Andy Burnham and John Healey to devise a new set of fiscal rules that place greater emphasis on the growth and societal benefits of public investment. Under the existing rules, Healey must ensure all daily public spending is funded by tax revenues in three years.

However, the think tank added that these changes should not be enacted now because of the UK's "very real" exposure to bond vigilantes and the inflationary effects of the war in the Middle East. The yield on the UK's benchmark ten-year bond has traded at around 5 per cent since the conflict began almost six months ago.

The IPPR added that the overhaul should come in the next parliament once the global macroeconomic environment has improved to allow the UK to make the changes from "a position of strength".

It said: "With the Iran shock continuing to affect the economy, the risk of even higher borrowing costs means the government should stick to its fiscal rules and only change the borrowing path for policies that are key for growth or help reduce inflation."

The Times previously reported that the prime minister and chancellor have drawn up plans to increase government borrowing by £9 billion and channel that money through public financial institutions. Such a move would largely offset the extra borrowing if it involved the government acquiring assets, a change to the fiscal rules enacted by the previous chancellor, Rachel Reeves.

The Treasury announced last month that Healey's first budget will be delivered on October 28. The Resolution Foundation has warned that the fiscal headroom may have dropped to as low as £10 billion.

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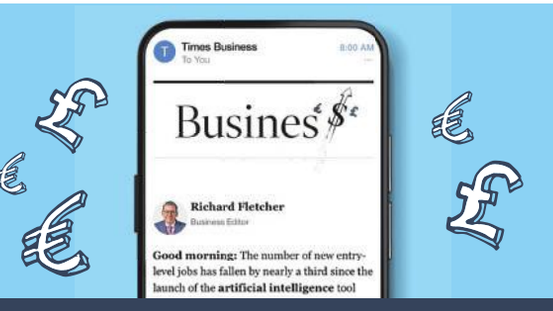

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Kushner and Iger to buy the LA Lakers

MEG OLIPHANT/GETTY IMAGES

The LA Lakers, who just lost star LeBron James, are being sold to Joshua Kushner. Games attract stars such as Timothée Chalamet and Kylie Jenner

One of the key figures in the recent debacle to sell off stakes in the Fifa World Cup to private investors is reported to be purchasing the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team for more than $12 billion (Robert Miller writes).

Joshua Kushner, 41, who founded and runs Thrive Capital, a venture capital firm, and Bob Iger, 75, the former chief executive of Walt Disney, will buy the stake from Mark Walter, who had purchased a controlling interest in the team from the Buss family last year for a then-record franchise valuation of about $10 billion.

Kushner, the brother of President Trump's son-in-law, Jared, also runs Thrive Eternal, the investment fund to which Fifa wanted to sell a minority stake to run its World Cup tournaments for $4.2 billion.

"As lifelong NBA fans, we are deeply honoured for the opportunity to become stewards of the Los Angeles Lakers, one of the most iconic sports franchises in the world.

"We have immense respect for the leadership and vision of Jerry and Jeanie Buss," Kushner and Iger said in a statement.

"Our long-term commitment is to build on that foundation, compete at the highest level, and serve this extraordinary team, its fans, and the city of Los Angeles."

The news comes weeks after Kushner became a key figure in the private equity scandal that engulfed Fifa, the global governing body of football, after The Times revealed plans last month to create a subsidiary to run future World Cup tournaments.

Fifa planned to spin off its broadcasting, sponsorship, ticketing, and tournament commercial rights into a separate for-profit entity valued at $20 billion, in a move that sparked widespread outrage and put the future of Fifa president Gianni Infantino in doubt.

The Lakers sale, first reported by ESPN, will need approval from the board of governors at the National Basketball Association. The next board meeting is set for next month in New York.

The $12.5 billion price tag is not only record-setting for American pro sports, but it continues a trend of sharply rising NBA franchise values.

Only three years ago, Michael Jordan sold his majority stake in the Charlotte Hornets for a $3 billion valuation, and the Boston Celtics were sold last year at a valuation of just over $6 billion, then a record.

The Lakers have won 17 championships going back to the franchise's early years in Minneapolis — the second-most in NBA history behind Boston's 18.

This record sale price comes just weeks after LeBron James, the league's all-time leading scorer, left the Lakers after eight seasons to become a free agent. James ultimately decided to sign with the Philadelphia 76ers.

Tax fears and the budget dampen housing market

Tom Howard Property Correspondent

Estate agents are fearful that renewed speculation about potential changes to property taxes will see them miss out, once again, on the usual autumn bounce in the housing market.

New buyer inquiries, sales and house prices fell once again in the past month, according to data from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (Rics), which surveyed 430 estate agents around the country.

The housing market always slows over summer with buyers and sellers on holiday, but a combination of the war in Iran, higher mortgage rates, a new prime minister, heatwaves and the World Cup have combined to make this summer particularly quiet.

Rics said the market "remains sluggish, with minimal signs of momentum picking up as of yet" and agents believe that uncertainty about potential tax changes is also starting to weigh on activity.

They are concerned that they will not get to enjoy the "autumn selling season" for the third year in a row as househunters wait for the budget in October to see what Andy Burnham and his new chancellor, John Healey, have in store.

Housebuilders have been lobbying for a return of the Help to Buy scheme and cuts to stamp duty, and reforming council tax has also been much speculated upon. This week, economists at Capital Economics warned that the upcoming budget "may be almost as big as the last" in terms of raising taxes.

"There appears to be limited understanding of the impact that tax speculation has on the market," Edward Rock, of Knight Frank estate agents, said. "Uncertainty stagnates markets and recent policy signals have compounded this."

"We desperately need stability," David Robinson, director at DJR Estate Agents in Cornwall, said. "[There is the] traditional school holiday lull in activity but a definite undercurrent of uncertainty with the new PM and likely increased tax exposure for the property market."

Simon Hobbs, of London & City Estates in Newcastle, added that the "political uncertainty re tax increases is causing buyer reticence".

James Ottewell, of Alexander Bruce Estates in Derby, agreed that "the sales market remains challenging, not helped by political uncertainty and potential land tax changes".

Of the estate agents and surveyors polled by Rics, a net 28 per cent reported a fall in inquiries from prospective buyers in the past month. Although an improvement from the immediate aftermath of the first US-Israeli strikes on Iran, it "remains firmly in negative territory".

A net 30 per cent of respondents saw a fall in agreed sales and a similar proportion reported another fall in house prices. The bigger declines were in London and south England, where prices are highest and so most affected by changes in mortgage rates.

Even in Scotland, prices "now appear to be flattening out". Northern Ireland continues to buck the trend, however, with agents there reporting further price increases over the past month.

Simon Rubinsohn, chief economist at Rics, said: "The housing market remains subdued, and while that is not unusual over the summer months, it is clear from the seasonally adjusted data, that the combination of geopolitics, the domestic political climate and the cost of mortgage finance are continuing to weigh on sentiment."

He added that more forward-looking metrics of housing market activity "also remain downbeat".

Most estate agents expect prices and sales to continue to slide in the coming three months.

Winkworth family agrees to pause father-and-son feud

Tom Howard

The family behind one of Britain's oldest estate agents have agreed to park their legal dispute, which has pitted father against son, for at least a month.

M Winkworth, which is run by Dominic Agace, 46, announced last Friday that it was taking legal action in the High Court against its chairman and Dominic's father, Simon, 83, to stop him from ousting other board members.

Winkworth, which has 100 or so offices in and around London, said yesterday Simon had agreed to a four-week ceasefire and that all parties were "continuing discussions with a view to resolving the matters between them".

A stock exchange statement read: "The undertakings restrict [Simon] Agace from taking or encouraging steps to remove or appoint company directors without first giving seven days' written notice and, in any event, before September 10, 2026."

With a temporary agreement in place, Winkworth said its application for interim injunctive relief had been adjourned to October 5. The company's Aim-quoted shares rose 2½p, or 1.5 per cent, to 172½p on the back of the news, valuing the business at £23 million.

Last week, Dominic sent a memo to employees and franchisees, seen by The Times, in which he disclosed that his father had "recently demanded changes to the board and indicated that, if those demands were not met, a requisition would follow to remove certain board members and replace them with individuals he proposes".

He added that the directors of the business did not believe the overhaul sought by Simon "would be in the best interests of the company" and had gone to court to "protect" the estate agency and prevent its chairman from making sweeping changes to the board.

Simon is Winkworth's biggest shareholder with a 41 per cent stake, or 5.3 million shares, according to the company's website.

At Winkworth's annual meeting in May, 5.3 million shares were withheld from voting on the re-election of all of the company's directors, except for the re-election of Simon, when only 9,714 shares were abstained.

The developments suggest a battle for control of the estate agent. Although it was founded in 1835, Simon bought the business in 1974 and ran it for three decades before becoming non-executive chairman in 2004. Dominic became chief executive in 2009 and led it through its flotation on Aim that year.

Winkworth said it "continues to operate as normal" and that the executive team, led by Dominic, "remains focused on the delivery of the company's strategy".

ALAMY

Tui said a large part of its summer programme had been sold, with demand for short and medium-haul destinations, such as Skiathos, the key driver of bookings

Tui profits suffer as global conflict hits holiday plans

Jessica Newman
Leisure Industries Correspondent

Cautious holidaymakers unsettled by the conflict in the Middle East have led Europe's largest travel company to report a larger-than-expected fall in third-quarter profit.

Tui's underlying profits fell 27 per cent to €234.6 million in the quarter to end of June, below analysts' forecast of €274 million, and at the pre-tax level dropped 43 per cent to €153.4 million.

Revenue was also behind City estimates of €6 billion, declining 5.6 per cent year-on-year to €5.85 billion.

The German company, which owns five airlines as well as hotel chains, travel agencies and cruise lines, said the period was characterised by a "challenging market environment and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties, in particular the war in Iran, which has pushed up jet fuel prices, economic weakness in Europe's core markets and consumer caution across many sectors".

Tui revealed that so far it had suffered an €81 million hit to profits in the first nine months of its financial year because of the stop-start US-Iran war and Hurricane Melissa in Jamaica.

Sebastian Ebel, the chief executive, admitted that 2026 had not shaped up to be an "ordinary year". He said: "Wars and geopolitical tensions, consumer caution, economic weakness and rising inflation in Europe's core markets — all these factors have influenced consumer sentiment and the timing of purchasing decisions.".

Despite these headwinds, Ebel said the company's business model was resilient with travel remaining "highly relevant to people's lives".

Tui's markets and airline business, which includes its traditional tour operator division, swung to a €17.4 million underlying loss in the quarter, against a €49.7 million profit a year earlier, which it blamed on weakening demand because of geopolitical uncertainty and increased price pressure.

Profits at its hotels and resorts division dropped 6.2 per cent to €122.7 million, with occupancy down 5 percentage points to 77 per cent due to reduced demand in the eastern Mediterranean, Mexico and the Caribbean.

The holiday experiences arm, which includes its differentiated cruise lines, hotels, and tour and activities division Tui Musement, proved more resilient, with underlying profits slipping 5.6 per cent to €277.8 million. Its cruise business recorded a 7.2 per cent decrease in profit after a one-off €20 million hit from the war in Iran. In March, Tui was forced to repatriate about 5,000 passengers from two cruise ships anchored in Abu Dhabi, which remained in the Gulf ports until mid-May.

Bookings in the first nine months totalled 12.2 million, with 4.3 million added since the last update in May. Tui said a large part of its summer programme had now been sold, with demand for short and medium-haul destinations the key driver of bookings. Greece and Spain were the most popular destinations, while sales in the eastern Mediterranean have also started to pick up again in recent weeks.

Ebel said the initial impact from the Iran war had eased, adding: "The last four weeks in particular show booking behaviour is picking up again. People are travelling but are making their decisions at shorter notice." He said wildfires in France and Spain had not had any impact on Tui's bookings.

The company reiterated its profit outlook for the full year, which is expected to come in between €1.1 billion and €1.4 billion, "assuming that there is no significant escalation in geopolitical tensions".

Tui, which had previously forecast profit to increase between 7 per cent and 10 per cent from the €1.4 billion made in the previous year, did not reinstate its sales guidance, which it suspended in April.

Richard Clarke, an analyst at Bernstein, said Tui's update implied that overall trading appeared weaker than management expected for the late booking cycle.

He noted that while the company did reiterate the full-year profit outlook, bosses had "removed the May wording referencing an ambition to build towards the top end of the range".

Clarke continued: "Given there are only six weeks left in the financial year and most summer travel is booked, the €300 million guidance range remains unusually wide, particularly in the absence of any revenue guidance."

The shares closed down 1.2 per cent at €7.28 in Frankfurt.

Evoke blames gambling taxes for fall in revenue

Jessica Newman

The debt-laden owner of William Hill has blamed higher gambling taxes for hurting half-year profits.

In what is likely to be Evoke's final results as a public company, it revealed underlying operating profits dropped 12 per cent to £142.8 million in the six months to the end of June after booking a £46 million hit from rising gambling taxes. On a pre-tax level, losses widened to £80 million from £77.7 million a year earlier.

Last year's budget included a rise in remote gaming duty from 21 per cent to 40 per cent. There is also a new online sports betting duty of 25 per cent to cover all sports except UK horse racing.

The levies are expected to raise an extra £1.1 billion annually for the Treasury by 2029-30.

Evoke estimates the tax rises, prior to any mitigation measures, will add up to £135 million a year once the measures are fully implemented from next April.

It has offset more than half of the rise in gaming duty through "lower but more effective marketing investment, improved promotional efficiency and operational cost savings".

The company shut about 200 of its high street shops in May to cut costs.

Per Widerström, chief executive, said: "The first half demonstrated the resilience of the business in a significantly more challenging operating environment following substantial increases in gaming duties introduced across some of our core markets, most notably in the UK."

Two months ago Evoke recommended a £243 million takeover by the Greek lottery and casino company Bally's Intralot. The companies said at the time that increases in gambling taxes in the UK and heightened competition have resulted in an "opportunity for consolidation". Evoke expects the deal to complete in the fourth quarter of this year or the first quarter of 2027.

In the first half of the year, Evoke generated flat revenues of £887.5 million as higher online sales at William Hill in the UK and Ireland were offset by declining revenues at 888.

International sales fell by 2 per cent due to weaker trading in Spain and Romania, overshadowing growth of 21 per cent in Italy and 13 per cent in Denmark.

Shares in Evoke, down more than 70 per cent since its 2006 listing, were up by ½p, or 0.9 per cent, to 46p.

Asian tech stocks drive Norwegian wealth fund

Charlotte Bend

The soaring valuation of Asian semiconductor stocks, and its $1.2 billion holding in SpaceX, helped Norway's sovereign wealth fund to its strongest quarter in six years.

The world's largest sovereign fund, worth $2.3 trillion and managed by Norges Bank, returned 11.5 per cent in the second quarter. That lifted first-half profit to a record NKr1.75 trillion (£137 billion).

Equity investments drove the gains, with a 16 per cent return, while fixed income contributed 1.1 per cent. Unlisted real estate and infrastructure investments both returned 1.8 per cent. The fund's return was 22 basis points higher than its benchmark index.

"The result is driven by good returns in the equity market, particularly from Asian technology stocks," Nicolai Tangen, the chief executive of Norges Bank Investment Management, said.

Norges owns about 1.5 per cent of all listed stocks globally with a small stake in more than 7,200 companies.

Its biggest holding at the end of the first half was $62 billion of Nvidia, followed by $52 billion of Apple and $50 billion of Alphabet. It also holds a 1 per cent stake in Tesla that was reported to be worth about $15.7 billion by the end of the first half. It owns about £90 billion of UK shares through close to 1,000 investments.

7,200
Companies across the world in which Norges owns a stake
Source: Norges Bank

The sovereign wealth fund was set up in the 1990s by the Norwegian government to manage profits from oil and gas revenues. Since 1998, it has generated an average annual return of 6.86 per cent. It accounts for about a quarter of Norway's public spending.

Tangen has, nevertheless, warned that there was a risk of the fund losing its entire value, given the extreme threats facing global markets.

In a speech to a political conference in Arendal, southern Norway, this week he said: "I want to contribute to our mental emergency preparedness by asking the question, can the oil fund disappear? The answer to that question is yes and the worst is that in the world we live in now, it is not completely improbable. No country in history has managed to retain such a considerable fortune for any length of time. Fortunes always end up disappearing."

He highlighted several extreme scenarios that could threaten the fund's value, including nuclear war and acts of biological terrorism and warned of the possibility of a prolonged economic depression caused by a combination of factors, including the bursting of an "AI bubble" and a trade war between the United States and China.

However, he added: "It is interesting how the economy is more resilient than what was the case in the old days.

"And so clearly companies have worked on supply chains, they worked on different back-up systems, they seem to have a more flexible supply situation generally. If you were going back two years, if you had predicted tariffs, trade barriers, you would not have expected the market and the economy to be as strong as it is."

Business

Data centres and renewable energy help rebuild Balfour

Robert Lea Industrial Editor

Demand for US data centres and the transition of Britain's energy infrastructure has sent profits and orders surging at Balfour Beatty, and pushed its shares to a record high.

The rise in the construction company's stock, valuing the group at nearly £4.5 billion, raised the prospect of its re-entry to the FTSE 100 for the first time since a short-lived appearance in 2009.

It is quite a turnaround for a company that was in such crisis in 2014 that it received takeover bids from Carillion, a smaller rival that would subsequently go bust a little over three years later.

For the first six months of this year, Balfour reported a 46 per cent leap in pre-tax profits to £139 million on revenues 8 per cent up at £5.56 billion.

The results were driven by the number of UK energy transmission projects in the decarbonisation of the national networks entering the construction phase, and a return to profit in the US civil engineering division which accounts for about 40 per cent of group revenues.

On top of that, Balfour upgraded forecasts for the year from high single-digit percentage growth to a low double-digit percentage increase.

The earnings were not the only line exciting investors. The company cranked up the interim dividend by 12 per cent to 4.7p and reported that its order book has swollen to £22.9 billion, 17 per cent higher than a year ago. More importantly it is sitting on access to £1.7 billion of cash.

Plugged in

Share price

That means the company's £200 million share buyback programme is likely to be extended. A long dormant acquisition strategy in the US could also be renewed.

All that sent shares in Balfour up 61p, or 7 per cent, to close at 926½p. This time last year, the shares were at 550p. In the depths of the pandemic they were just above 200p.

"This is a strong operational and financial performance," Philip Hoare, the chief executive, said as he reported the first numbers that he can call his own after joining the company last year from Atkins Réalis, the Canadian civil engineering consultancy.

Hoare replaced Leo Quinn, the executive brought in to save Balfour Beatty after the ignominy of the Carillion approach. He built the group back up based on a simple recipe of accepting only contracts on which it could make decent money, and then executing them without mishap. Quinn is now leading attempts to restore WH Smith, the retailer.

"We have a positive outlook and are in strong growth markets," Hoare said. "We are seeking significant and attractive future returns for our shareholders."

Balfour Beatty is a key player in Britain's energy and transport markets — at the Hinkley Point and Sizewell nuclear power stations and building the grid connections for offshore wind farms; and on the HS2 railways project and upgrades of the country's road networks.

The company believes that the UK grid connections alone will lead to compound annual growth of 20 per cent and is claiming a 25 per cent share of the market.

However, it is in the US where Balfour sees big opportunities in building data centres for the artificial intelligence boom and in renewal programmes at airports. It says the data centres market is worth $250 billion over the next four years.

Stephen Rawlinson, an independent analyst of the sector, said: "The company has a high-quality problem which is around what it might do with its £1.7 billion of year-end cash.

"It has grown organically in recent years and shows limited interest in mergers and acquisition — and why not as it has plenty of growth in its current core operations and the relevant skills. But that is an area to explore."

Peel Hunt, the stockbroker, upgraded its target price for the shares to £10.50 from 960p, stating: "We expected a strong performance and Balfour Beatty delivered again. The outlook remains positive, supported by the rising and well-bid order book."

Vestas raises outlook as it blows away forecasts

Renewed hostilities raise pressure on oil supplies

Simon Freeman

Global oil supply will fall by 4.3 million barrels a day (bpd), or about 4 per cent, this year as renewed hostilities in the Middle East push the world deeper into an oil-market deficit, the global energy watchdog warned.

The International Energy Agency (IEA), which advises industrialised countries, said that renewed attacks on tankers in the Strait of Hormuz, and the expansion of the near six-month conflict into the Red Sea, had added further disruption to strained supplies. The expected supply drop is steeper than the 3.7 million bpd reduction it forecast last month when ceasefire talks were taking place: it would put global supply about 1.27 million bpd below demand.

Middle East oil loadings had recovered to 20 million bpd at the start of July, broadly in line with pre-war Hormuz traffic the IEA said, but dropped back to 12 million bpd later in the month. Middle East production was 8.3 million bpd below pre-war levels in July, the IEA added, compared with 14 million bpd of lost output at the peak of the crisis. "The nascent recovery under way from mid-May narrowed the supply deficit in June, but renewed hostilities undermined trade flows," it said.

For 2027, the agency sees global supply outstripping total demand by 4.61 million bpd, assuming de-escalation in the coming months. That surplus could allow inventories to recover to their February 2026 level by the middle of next year.

The IEA now expects global demand to contract this year by 1.6 million bpd, steeper than the roughly one million bpd drop seen last month.

Restricted refined fuel supplies and higher prices, have curtailed demand, the IEA said, with naphtha and gasoil (red diesel) the worst-hit products, and Asia and the Middle East bearing the brunt of the year-on-year declines.

The price of Brent crude, the international benchmark which has swung between $70 and $120 in the past few months, was trading at just below $85 yesterday having begun the week at $80.

Caitlin Moran on How to be Hopeful

Join us for a brilliantly funny and uplifting evening as Times columnist **Caitlin Moran** hits the stage for the London instalment of her nationwide tour. In conversation with her friend and colleague – Times Radio presenter **Hugo Rifkind** – Caitlin will unravel the themes of her essential new book, *How to be Hopeful: A Year of Attempting to Feel Less Awful About the World.*

Thursday, September 17 | 7.30pm
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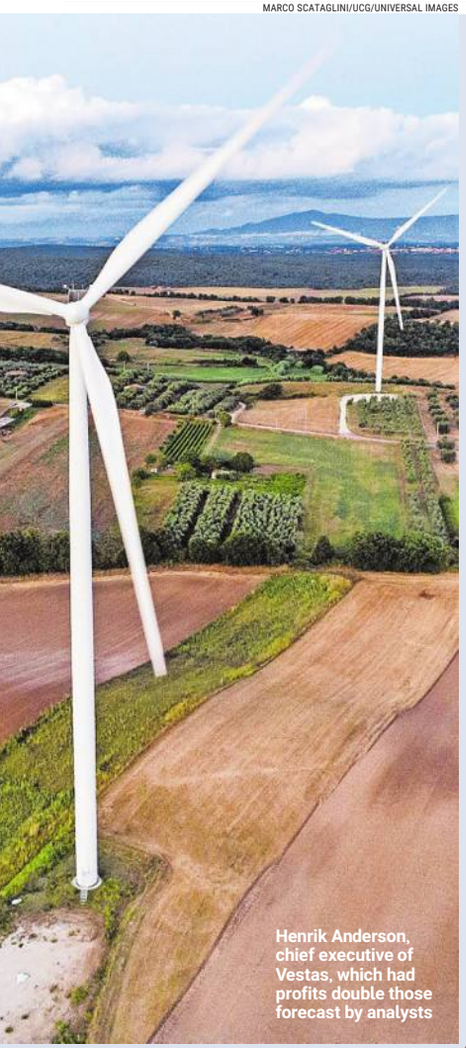

Henrik Anderson, chief executive of Vestas, which had profits double those forecast by analysts

One of Europe's largest wind turbine makers had second-quarter profits of more than double forecasts, announced a buyback programme and said turnaround plans had succeeded (Charlotte Bend writes).

Vestas, which in January received a £20 million grant to safeguard more than 300 jobs at a factory on the Isle of Wight, raised its full-year outlook.

It said operating profit before special items for the April to June quarter rose to €446 million against €57 million a year ago and an average forecast of €205 million.

The Danish company expects a full-year operating margin before special items of 7 per cent to 9 per cent, up from 6 per cent to 8 per cent. Sales would be between €20 billion and €22 billion. In 2025, revenue was €18.8 billion.

The 600-strong workforce at the site on the Isle of Wight were told at the start of the year their jobs were at risk due to a lack of demand for offshore turbine blades. About half of these roles were saved by the government-provided support.

Henrik Anderson, chief executive, said: "The improvement was driven by power solutions, both onshore and offshore, while order intake grew 67 per cent year-on-year. We raise the 2026 outlook on profitability."

Vestas' book of orders and service agreements was worth €76.9 billion at the end of the second quarter, up from €9.6 billion a year ago. The Copenhagen-listed shares closed up DKr34.80, or 19.66 per cent, at DKr211.80.

Swap shops for homes to revitalise our high streets

Stuart Lipton
Comment

Britain's high streets are not failing because people have stopped shopping. They are changing because the way we live, work, socialise and spend our time has changed.

For decades we have tried to save the high street by attracting more shops. But we cannot out-Amazon Amazon. Online retail offers convenience, price, and choice ,that's something the high street finds almost impossible with the days of parking or even a decent toilet long gone. Stop trying to recreate the past and build something far more ambitious: a place people visit because it makes their lives better.

The high street of the future should be Britain's modern village green — a place to live, work, learn, exercise, create, meet friends, find a partner, start a business, and feel part of society. It is no longer a retail pitch. It is a social contract.

Covid accelerated one of the biggest changes to our towns in generations. Millions discovered they could work from home — and then discovered its limits like discovering a friendship or meeting a future partner at a kitchen table. People have rediscovered the value of being together. Offices will concentrate in the big cities, leaving many secondary towns with only local businesses. That is not a problem; it is an extraordinary opportunity.

Redundant offices and car parks can become housing, gardens, and public spaces. The handsome houses that originally formed our streets, long ago converted to shops and offices, should be converted back into homes.

Thousands of empty upper floors above shops should become attractive, affordable, accessible homes or redeveloped into new higher-density buildings with community amenities — particularly for older people, who stay independent longer living close to shops, transport, healthcare, and other people.

More residents mean more customers, more businesses, and safer streets. Housing is not something alongside the high street. Housing is the high street.

The successful street needs a new mix. Roughly one third can remain retail — independent, specialist and innovative rather than identical chains, with planning enforcement keeping the street free of paraphernalia (removing vape shops from Class E would be an easy start). One third should be services and hospitality: cafés, restaurants, fitness, repair — things that make people stay rather than merely transact.

The final third should be civic infrastructure: GP surgeries, diagnostic clinics, libraries, nurseries, education, workspace, and culture. Health and education generate the daily footfall that retail once did. A wellbeing centre offering preventative checks could be the modern street's most important anchor — and people fit to leave hospital but with nowhere suitable to go could move to accessible town-centre apartments, close to care and company, instead of blocking beds. Do not keep people in expensive hospitals when what they need is somewhere appropriate to live.

At the centre of every town should be a beautiful square — the community's living room, where a community café sells a good cappuccino for £1, because meeting someone should be affordable. And we must rediscover fun. There should always be something happening, live music, street theatre, a lunchtime comedian, food festivals, markets. People are attracted to places where other people are having a good time. A successful high street makes people say: let's go into town — there's always something on.

Add the things the internet cannot supply. An AI and innovation centre offering affordable courses in the technology changing our lives; a library reborn as a centre for ideas; makers' spaces, a Men's Shed, a community kitchen teaching families to cook dinner for £5; padel, table-tennis and bowls; a flexible hall that is a meeting place in the morning and a theatre or cinema at night; and affordable units where young entrepreneurs test ideas — on fair business rates that no longer handicap the physical shop against the online warehouse. Beauty matters through public green space architecture, trees, water, seating, light. Every high street should be treated as a piece of civic art.

The social dividend would be enormous. A young person not in education, employment or training (Neet) could walk into that centre and learn coding, cooking, or construction and bring back the fun from childhood hobbies and discover a talent that leads to a job. Young people with somewhere to go and people who believe in them are far harder for criminal gangs to exploit. Loneliness falls: physical and mental health improves; pressure on the NHS eases.

Above all, we improve the nation's spirits and confidence and optimism are not soft economics but the raw material of growth and we save billions in welfare.

This needs a national mission: government and local leaders with the help of devolution helping towns acquire and convert redundant buildings, restore houses, create squares, and fund civic facilities — judged not by shops opened but by homes, jobs, health, and happiness created.

The purpose of development is not to construct buildings. It is to improve people's lives. If we create places that people love, they will come. If they come, businesses will thrive. And if people have somewhere to go, something to do and people to meet, we can rebuild not just Britain's high streets, but Britain's confidence.

Sir Stuart Lipton is the co-founder of Lipton Rogers Developments

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ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS

Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Strategic Bond Fund ‡	130.17		+0.22	8.10
UK Equity A ‡	401.5		+1.48	3.93
UK Growth ‡	10431.74		+47.69	2.21

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS

0800 092 2051

Authorised Inv Funds

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Income Fund R Acc ‡	384.86		+3.05	...
Global Income Fund R Inc ‡	216.43		+1.72	...
Global Select Fund R ‡	227.78		+0.95	...
High Income Fund R Inc ‡	66.91		+0.03	...
Income Fund R Acc ‡	808.08		-0.88	...
Income Fund R Inc ‡	309.72		-0.34	...
Monthly Dist & R Inc ‡	92.69		+0.32	...
SmartGarp Eurp Equity R ‡	900.84		+2.56	...
SmartGarp Global Equity R ‡	693.95		+0.62	...
SmartGarp UK Equity R ‡	4298.95		+11.02	...
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	94.69		+0.09	...
Strategic Bd R M Acc ‡	116.47		+0.21	...
Strategic Bd R M Inc ‡	52.66		+0.1	...
Strategic Bd R Q Acc ‡	116.27		+0.22	...
Strategic Bd R Q Inc ‡	52.52		+0.1	...
UK Select R Acc ‡	1350.74		+10.38	...
Uk Smaller Cos R Acc ‡	2375.24		+17	...
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡	1112.6		+6.8	...

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT

Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients:0845 777 5511

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Health ‡	3396		-17.00	...
UK Select Opps Inc ‡	2160		+2.00	1.10
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡	333.9		+1.20	0.37
UK Sust Eqty R Dis ‡	239		+0.50	1.10

AXA FUND MANAGERS

Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808

UK/Global Investment Companies

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Global Gwth Acc R ‡	288.1		...	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡	162.3		...	1.51

CIS UNIT MANAGERS

08457 46 46 46

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Growth ‡	299.20		...	1.14
Sus Leaders ‡	1038		...	1.47
UK Growth ‡@	882.80		...	1.69
UK Income ‡@	259.10		...	3.83

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT

Dealing 020 7426 6232

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	5663.32		...	0.60

COLUMBIA THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Enqs:0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 6083

Share Class 1-Retail

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Gwth & Inc ‡	1627		+7	0.10
FTSE All Shr Track ‡	598.8		+0.1	2.70
Global Gwth SCI ‡	406.2		+1.5	...
Strategic Bd ‡	228.7		+0.5	3.90

EDENTREE INV MGMT

0800 358 3010

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Sust Eur Eqty A Dis ‡@	495		+1.20	1.77
Sust Gbl Eqty A Dis ‡	463.2		-0.90	0.55
Sust Mgd Income ‡	141.8		+0.40	4.72
Sust Sterling Bond A Dis ‡	85.35		+0.31	4.98
Sust UK Eqty A Dis ‡@	256.7		+1.30	1.63
Sust UK Eqty Opps A Dis ‡	330.7		+0.90	1.42

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL

Private Clnts:0800 414161 Broker Dlgs:0800 414181

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec ‡	2950		...	...
American ‡	8090		...	...
Euro Opps ‡	748.4		...	0.48
European ‡	4464		...	0.76
Global Focus ‡	3741		...	...
Global High Income Bond A Dis ‡	22.38		...	6.38
Global Special Sits ‡	9014		...	...
Japan ‡	994.7		...	0.33
Moneyblder Bal ‡	48.78		...	0.60
Moneyblder Inc ‡	28.28		...	5.02
Moneyblder UK Ind ‡	202.48		...	2.47
Special Sits ‡	7540		...	1.64

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Opportunities Fund A Dis ‡	106.8		...	1.41

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS

01296 386 386

Authorised Inv Funds

Share Class C

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡	37.42		...	4.50
Intl Gwth ‡	216.6		...	0.60
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡	108.8		...	...
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡	121.0		...	...

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK)

Enq:0845 745 6123 Dlg:0845 745 6126 Mon-Frid:8-6

HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡	1634		-7	0.77
Euro Ind Acc ‡	1868		-4	2.27
Euro Ind Inc ‡	1082		-2	2.32
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡	441.8		-0.5	2.49
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡	179.3		-0.2	2.64
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡	414.1		+4.0	2.84
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡	224.5		+2.2	2.83
FTSE All-S Acc ‡	1118		+5	2.65
FTSE FTSE All-S Inc ‡	503.3		+2.7	2.79
Japan Ind Acc ‡	237.4		+2.3	1.42
Japan Ind Inc ‡	172.3		+1.6	1.46
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	1059		+13	1.56
Pacific Ind Inc ‡	599.5		+7.5	1.58

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) Retail Share Class

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	312.5		+1.1	4.20
Income Acc ‡	1062		...	3.28
Income Inc ‡@	402.7		-0.1	3.31
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.4		...	3.75
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	155.9		...	4.02
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	226.0		-0.2	2.97
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inv ‡@	87.59		-0.07	3.04

HSBC Specialist Investment Fds (OEIC)

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Inc ‡	1258		-6	0.76

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD

Dling:0800 085 8571 Inv Serv:0800 085 8677

Brkr Serv:0800 028 2121

Invesco Funds

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond ‡	232.15		...	4.06
High Income Dis ‡	434.29		...	3.14
Income & Growth Dis ‡	505.68		...	3.09
Income Inc ‡	1677.56		...	2.85
Money Acc ‡	107.86		...	3.64
Monthly Inc Plus Dis ‡	92.39		...	5.73
UK Opps UK Acc ‡	1397.96		...	1.47
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡	1378.59		...	1.19

INVESTEC FUND MGRS LTD

Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900

OEIC Series I, ii,iii & iv

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡	881.68		-5.1	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡	471.52		-0.56	2.61
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	270.16		-0.3	2.48
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡	333.19		+0.85	0.20
Diversified Growth Inc ‡	122.62		+0.31	0.94
Diversified Income A Acc ‡	376.73		+0.1	3.78
Diversified Income A Inc ‡	67.84		+0.02	5.20
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Ac ‡	144.31		+0.02	5.97
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡	66.85		+0.01	7.67
Emerging Mkts Equity A Ac ‡	289.9		+0.84	0.04
Emerging Mkts Leaders A Acc ‡	1238.67		+14.73	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡	304.2		-0.63	...
Global Franchise A Acc ‡	405.96		-2.34	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡	2113.27		-11.65	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡	570.2		+1.25	...
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡	533.33		-0.29	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡	409.16		-0.22	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡	2756.97		+18.77	1.02
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡	948.15		+6.46	1.03

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEIC)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS

Investor Serv: 0800 832 831 Dlng:0845 946 4646

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stcks Credit A Inc ‡	113.9		...	4.50
Asian Div Inc U Trust Inc ‡	98.88		...	5.60
Cautious Managed Fd A Acc ‡	359.1		...	3.80
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡	154.1		...	3.90
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡	1320		...	0.10
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡	301.5		...	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡	3263		...	0.20
Fix IntMnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡	33.2		...	5.90
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡	6628		...	...
Global Equity Income A Ac ‡	88.97		...	2.30
Global Tech A Acc ‡	7118		...	...
Instl UK idx Opps A Acc ‡	180.6471		...	2.10
M-Asset Abs Rtn A Acc ‡	188.3		...	2.70
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡	339		+0.6	1.80
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡	163.1		...	2.80
M-Man Inc Fd Grth A Acc ‡	233.6		...	2.70
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡	230.2		...	4.30
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡	55.61		...	4.30
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡	95.59		...	5.70
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡	207.2		...	2.10
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡	202.9		...	1.20
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡	3037		...	...

J.P. MORGAN ASSET MANAGEMENT OEIC

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Equity Core E Net Acc ‡@	711.8000		+0.2000	2.51

JUPITER UT TRUST MANAGERS LTD

020 7581 3020

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Distribution & Growth ‡	125.51		+0.4579	2.93
Euro Special Sits ‡	608.24		+0.5107	0.71
European ‡	4048.52		+0.5152	0.61
Financial Opps ‡	1362.69		+0.3237	1.01
Global Macro Bd L GBP ACC ‡	427.77		+0.2822	3.87
Merlin Bal Acc ‡	348.09		+0.0566	2.26
Merlin Growth Acc ‡	836.47		-0.3659	0.20
Merlin Inc Acc ‡@	471.21		+0.1719	3.40
Merlin Wwide Inc ‡	610.87		+0.0342	...
UK Dynamic Equity L Dis ‡	297.57		+0.1674	1.75
UK Growth ‡	284.74		-0.1236	0.64
UK Income Trust ‡	1021.04		+0.2632	4.58

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MANGRS) LTD

Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Ind Acc ‡	818.7000		+40.0000	190.00
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	488.9000		+30.0000	200.00
Fixed Int Acc ‡	150.6000		+60.0000	460.00
Fixed Int Dist ‡	62.2500		+26.0000	460.00
Global Health ‡	123.8		-1.7	0.90
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	238.9		+0.9	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	154.3000		+10.0000	570.00
Japan Ind Acc ‡	113.9000		+90.0000	130.00
Pacific Ind Acc ‡	417.7000		+540.0000	140.00
UK Index Trust Acc ‡	540.5000		...	250.00
Uk Index Trust Dist ‡	234.0000		...	250.00
US Ind Acc ‡	1428		-4	0.50
Worldwide Acc ‡	472.8000		+40.0000	90.00

M&G SECURITIES

Enq:0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196

Authorised Inv Funds

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1906.11		+0.117655092	5.12

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	827.84		...	5.09
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	67.19		...	4.38
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.8		...	6.25
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	101.87		...	1.56
Index Trckr Inc ‡	105.01		+0.0190494333	3.00
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	25.36		...	4.25
UK Select A Inc ‡	3318.53		...	2.64

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	32.87		...	5.01
Dividend Inc ‡	66.62		...	5.36
Recovery A Inc ‡	143.09		...	2.84
Sml Cos Inc ‡	367.07		...	2.79

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡	162.03		...	3.78

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST

0808 005 5555

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income ‡	87.14		...	4.60
High Income Acc ‡	297.3		...	4.60
UK 100 Comp Acc ‡	721.1		...	3.10
UK 100 Comp Inc ‡	324.4		...	3.10
UK Select Port ‡	485.3		...	2.90
UK Select Port Acc ‡	1110.2		...	2.90
W'wide Mgd Acc ‡@	1341		...	0.20
Worldwide Mgd Acc ‡@	746.3		...	0.20

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT

Enquiries: 0800 0961 962

The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)

Class A Shares

Equity

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡	1049.40		...	1.54
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡	938.65		...	1.55
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡	936.69		...	1.49
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡	1046.53		...	1.47
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡	1036.68		...	1.65
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡	989.88		...	1.66
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡	1034.12		...	1.57
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡	989.45		...	1.60
Glob Br Eq Fund F Inc ‡	1107.72		...	4.31
Glob Br Eq Fund I Acc ‡	1745.03		...	4.27
Glob Br Eq Fund I Inc ‡	1171.06		...	4.39
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	14219.49		...	0.32
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	1646.23		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1754.7		...	0.45
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡	3824.58		...	0.32
Glob Quality Fund F Acc (PH) ‡	1556.74		...	0.49
Glob Quality Fund F Inc ‡	1517.91		...	0.51
Glob Quality Fund I Acc ‡	1559.9		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund I Acc (PH) ‡	1551.32		...	0.34
Glob Quality Fund F Acc ‡	1576.37		...	0.51
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡	144.78		...	4.87
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡	98.18		...	4.89
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡	1382.61		...	4.72
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡	3062.87		...	4.72
US Adv F F Acc ‡	2456.47		...	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡	1477.52		...	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡	2586.39		...	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡	1529.8		...	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS

08457 413002

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc Inc ‡	243.7		...	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr ‡	230.8000		...	...
UK Growth I Acc ‡	656.6		...	...
UK Growth Inc ‡	315.2		...	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRES LTD

0141 248 6100

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Far Eastern Inc	617.0700	649.4700	...	...
Mutual Far Eastern	1370.4500	1446.3900	+15.98	0.39
Mutual UK Eq	1429.4900	1508.7000	...	7.81
UK Equity Inc	562.2300	593.3800	...	7.81

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MNGRS

0845 300 2244

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

Tracker & Special Investment Funds

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡	605.3		-1.00	2.50
UK Trkr A Inc ‡	275.5		-0.40	2.50

UK & Income Investment Funds

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	329.2		+0.60	4.00
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	108.0		+0.20	4.00
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡	471.9		-1.90	2.10
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	298.6		-1.40	6.40
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	70.36		-0.34	6.40
Hi Res A Acc ‡	561.7		-0.60	3.70
Hi Res A Inc ‡	152.0		-0.20	3.80
Strat In A Acc ‡@	228.9		+0.30	4.50
Strat In A Inc ‡@	86.22		+0.12	4.50
UK Eq Trckr A ‡	136.5		-0.10	2.50

OEIC B Class

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡	670.6		-1.00	2.60
UK Trkr B Inc ‡	273.9		-0.50	2.60

OEIC C Class

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Eq Tkr C ‡	133.3		-0.10	2.60

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS

0845 279 3003

Investment Funds (OEIC)-Retail Shares

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡	98.58		...	2.52
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡	51.17		...	2.52
AAA Income Acc ‡	108.70		...	...
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡	293.80		...	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡	203		...	1.32
Glob Advtg Acc ‡	267.60		...	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡	186.00		...	...
Higher Inc Inc ‡	48.13		...	...
Managed Acc ‡	526.4		...	1.83
UK Ethical Acc ‡	257.70		...	...
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡	829.40		...	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS

Enquiries:0141 222 1151

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡	187.08		...	2.02
Blanced A Inc ‡	158.32		...	2.07
Cautious A Acc ‡	133.47		...	2.44
Cautious A Inc ‡	105.56		...	2.48
Dynamic A Acc ‡	500.07		...	1.40
Dynamic A Inc ‡	437.52		...	1.41
Growth A Acc ‡	494.03		...	1.63
Income A Acc ‡	319.98		...	2.17

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS

Client Serv: 0800 0684000

Retail Shares Class 1

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡	39.3849		+1.69	4.65
Threadneedle Mnthly Etr Inc Inc ‡	101.6815		+4.7	2.74
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Bd Inc ‡	54.9894		+19.21	4.27
Threadneedle SterlingCorp Acc ‡	54.8872		+19.13	3.95
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡	39.6141		+14.05	4.16
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡	41.8607		+9.41	3.82
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡	119.7589		-22.03	3.50
Threadneedle UK Growth & inc Rtl Inc ‡	112.7707		-24.85	3.21
Threadneedle UK Istl Rtl ‡	251.2022		-4.18	1.33
Threadneedle UK Mnthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡	90.1064		+0.07	3.00
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡	168.3156		-2.78	1.32
Theadneedle U Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡	408.3528		+77.09	0.38

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LTD

Fund	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
IFSL Marlborough Eur A Dis1010	1010		...	1.21

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-Linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
73.08	63.68	Tr IL 0 ½% 50	64.61	– .02	0.77	2.49
66.33	57.06	Tr IL 0 ¼% 52	57.74	– .03	0.43	2.49
101.91	97.20	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 28	99.59	+ .08	0.13	0.33
100.99	97.18	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 29	98.51	+ .09	0.13	0.70
98.88	94.73	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 31	95.95	+ .09	0.13	0.96
88.33	82.97	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 36	83.86	+ .10	0.15	1.86
82.85	76.16	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 39	77.81	+ .10	0.16	2.14
79.32	72.11	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 41	73.18	+ .08	0.17	2.24
74.05	65.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 44	67.47	+ .08	0.19	2.40
71.23	62.87	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 46	63.87	– .03	0.20	2.46
68.00	59.19	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 48	60.20	– .07	0.21	2.49
60.61	50.05	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 56	50.99	– .08	0.25	2.42
58.90	48.59	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 58	50.01	– .06	0.25	2.39
54.25	43.57	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 65	44.76	– .15	0.28	2.25
53.89	40.40	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 68	43.70	– .16	0.29	2.20
57.66	42.98	Tr IL 0 ⅛% 73	45.17	– .05	0.28	1.91
97.88	93.36	Tr IL 0 ¾% 34	94.19	+ .12	0.80	1.56
79.12	70.87	Tr IL 0 ¾% 47	71.89	– .06	1.04	2.45
62.70	49.79	Tr IL 0 ⅜% 62	52.78	– .07	0.71	2.34
87.38	80.77	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 40	81.55	+ .10	0.77	2.20
84.28	76.46	Tr IL 0 ⅝% 42	77.28	+ .03	0.81	2.31
104.16	100.95	Tr IL 1 ¼% 27	101.29	+ .07	1.23	0.23
103.67	99.28	Tr IL 1 ¼% 32	100.07	+ .11	1.25	1.24
86.56	72.33	Tr IL 1 ¼% 54	75.32	– .01	1.66	2.47
85.60	73.36	Tr IL 1 ¼% 55	74.88	– .02	1.67	2.46
99.52	94.19	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 35	94.96	+ .14	1.18	1.72
97.09	90.76	Tr IL 1 ⅛% 37	91.61	+ .14	1.23	1.96
102.53	95.86	Tr IL 1 ¾% 38	96.91	+ .12	1.81	2.04
99.42	88.49	Tr IL 1 ⅞% 49	89.82	– .10	2.09	2.45
248.27	236.46	Tr IL 2% 35	241.80	+ .22	0.83	1.69
349.35	338.41	Tr IL 4 ⅛% 30	342.16	+ .37	1.21	0.84

Longs (Over 15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
26.99	22.31	Tr 0 ½% 61	22.83	– .15	2.19	5.46
65.04	55.40	Tr 0 ⅛% 51	56.64	– .03	0.22	2.49
38.39	32.78	Tr 0 ⅝% 50	33.89	– .06	1.84	5.69
47.60	40.99	Tr 1 ½% 53	42.08	– .08	3.56	5.75
45.88	39.62	Tr 1 ¼% 51	40.77	– .06	3.07	5.75
33.04	27.53	Tr 1 ⅛% 73	28.03	– .10	4.01	5.28
48.44	41.88	Tr 1 ¾% 57	42.84	– .09	4.08	5.70
48.36	41.73	Tr 1 ⅝% 54	42.93	– .07	3.79	5.73
41.45	35.65	Tr 1 ⅝% 71	36.31	– .12	4.48	5.41
57.14	49.76	Tr 2 ½% 65	50.88	– .10	4.91	5.62
74.02	64.55	Tr 3 ½% 68	66.12	– .14	5.29	5.61
81.50	72.00	Tr 3 ¾% 52	73.75	– .09	5.08	5.70
80.90	71.30	Tr 3 ¾% 53	72.91	– .10	5.14	5.73
88.15	77.58	Tr 4 ¼% 55	79.38	– .12	5.35	5.71
83.52	73.44	Tr 4% 60	74.96	– .12	5.34	5.68

Mediums (5-15 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
83.19	79.47	Tr 0 ¼% 31	81.55	– .01	0.31	4.43
86.27	82.79	Tr 0 ⅜% 30	84.79	– .01	0.44	4.39
72.25	67.14	Tr 0 ⅝% 35	69.08	– .02	0.90	4.94
79.97	75.46	Tr 0 ⅞% 33	77.28	– .03	1.13	4.74
48.97	42.75	Tr 0 ⅞% 46	44.11	– .05	1.98	5.64
54.44	47.82	Tr 1 ½% 47	49.15	– .09	3.05	5.68
61.88	55.55	Tr 1 ¼% 41	57.34	– .04	2.18	5.40
66.75	60.85	Tr 1 ⅛% 39	62.71	– .04	1.79	5.24
75.83	69.99	Tr 1 ¾% 37	71.70	– .04	2.44	5.13
55.77	49.19	Tr 1 ¾% 49	50.39	– .09	3.47	5.69
85.07	81.01	Tr 1% 32	82.84	– .03	1.21	4.59
82.54	74.42	Tr 3 ½% 45	76.10	– .08	4.60	5.59
95.49	90.74	Tr 3 ¼% 33	92.11	– .03	3.53	4.68
80.41	72.57	Tr 3 ¼% 44	74.30	– .06	4.37	5.57
100.00	85.76	Tr 3 ¾% 38	87.64	– .05	4.28	5.19
102.40	96.34	Tr 4 ½% 34	97.85	– .04	4.60	4.82
101.93	0.01	Tr 4 ½% 35	97.19	– .04	4.63	4.91
96.45	87.54	Tr 4 ½% 42	89.51	– .08	5.03	5.48
102.33	0.01	Tr 4 ¼% 32	98.38	– .04	4.32	4.57
100.56	94.70	Tr 4 ¼% 34	96.17	– .04	4.42	4.83
99.39	92.65	Tr 4 ¼% 36	94.38	– .05	4.50	5.00
100.00	88.42	Tr 4 ¼% 39	90.35	– .03	4.70	5.28
100.00	86.92	Tr 4 ¼% 40	89.00	– .07	4.78	5.36
90.97	81.54	Tr 4 ¼% 46	83.50	– .08	5.09	5.62
89.58	79.95	Tr 4 ¼% 49	81.81	– .11	5.19	5.66
101.49	97.47	Tr 4 ⅛% 31	98.42	– .03	4.19	4.51
100.70	95.57	Tr 4 ⅛% 33	96.83	– .04	4.26	4.69
104.72	100.54	Tr 4 ¾% 30	101.32	+ ...	4.69	4.41
103.33	96.78	Tr 4 ¾% 35	98.40	– .04	4.83	4.97
102.00	93.84	Tr 4 ¾% 38	95.76	– .05	4.96	5.22
102.58	98.98	Tr 4 ⅜% 30	99.76	– .01	4.39	4.45
97.07	89.07	Tr 4 ⅜% 40	90.93	– .04	4.81	5.33
100.37	100.22	Tr 4 ⅝% 32	100.11	– .03	4.62	4.60
100.00	94.52	Tr 4 ⅝% 37	96.14	– .04	4.81	5.10
100.99	96.96	Tr 4 ⅞% 36	98.68	– .05	4.94	5.04
105.68	96.52	Tr 5 ¼% 41	98.67	– .06	5.32	5.38
105.44	93.20	Tr 5 ⅜% 56	95.26	– .14	5.64	5.71

Shorts (Under 5 Years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
91.87	89.09	Tr 0 ½% 29	91.25	+ ...	0.55	4.28
98.67	91.49	Tr 0 ⅛% 28	94.47	– .02	0.13	4.05
99.42	96.16	Tr 0 ⅜% 26	99.38	+ .01	0.38	3.63
91.00	0.01	Tr 0 ⅞% 29	89.73	– .01	0.98	4.36
97.43	95.29	Tr 1 ¼% 27	97.35	+ ...	1.28	4.19
95.46	92.89	Tr 1 ⅝% 28	94.53	– .01	1.72	4.26
101.17	98.03	Tr 4% 29	98.94	– .01	4.04	4.41
101.39	99.44	Tr 4 ¼% 27	100.02	– .01	4.25	4.23
101.88	98.28	Tr 4 ⅛ % 29	99.22	– .01	4.16	4.41
100.70	99.60	Tr 4 ⅛% 27	100.03	– .01	4.12	4.01
101.65	99.40	Tr 4 ⅜% 28	100.09	– .01	4.37	4.31
107.20	103.38	Tr 6% 28	103.86	– .02	5.78	4.23

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

This is a paid for information service. For further details on a particular fund, readers should contact their fund manager.

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Robert Stephens ***Tempus***
Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips

Why it's worth investing in this flyer

IAG

Market cap £19.3bn | **First-half revenue** €16.1bn

International Airlines Group's half-year results highlight the scale of challenges faced by the airline industry. The British Airways owner reported a 6 per cent year-on-year decline in operating profits amid higher fuel costs prompted by elevated geopolitical risks.

When combined with an uncertain near-term consumer outlook across its key markets, downbeat financial prospects for the current year, and a share price that has risen by 162 per cent in the past five years, should investors avoid the FTSE 100 group?

IAG was formed when British Airways and Spain's national carrier, Iberia, merged in 2011. It also owns the budget airlines Vueling and Level, as well as Ireland's flag carrier, Aer Lingus, alongside its cargo and package holiday operations.

While the company's fleet of 628 aircraft fly to 285 destinations in 93 countries between them, IAG's customer base is heavily focused on the UK, Spain and the US. They accounted for 71 per cent of revenue in the first six months of the current year, with their uncertain near-term economic outlooks set to contribute to a 5 per cent decline in IAG's earnings per share (EPS) this year.

Indeed, persistently sticky inflation and possible interest rate rises are likely to weigh on consumer demand for discretionary purchases such as air travel. However, this tough set of circumstances is set to give way to a more ebullient outlook during the medium term as inflation gradually falls and interest rate cuts move onto central bank agendas.

Next year, for instance, IAG is expected to post a 17 per cent rise in EPS. This means that its bottom line is due to be 11 per cent higher in 2027 than it was in 2025, despite the forecast fall in earnings this year.

Its profitability on a per share basis is set to be boosted by the continuation of a €1.5 billion share buyback programme that was announced in February and is just over 50 per cent complete. Share repurchases represent an extremely logical use of the company's excess cash, given its modest market valuation.

Even after their surge in the past five years, which equates to a 112 percentage point outperformance of the UK's large-cap index, IAG's shares trade on a price-to-earnings ratio of just 7.4. This is significantly lower than the FTSE 100's earnings multiple of 18.1 and shows that, as well as having scope for a material upward rerating and subsequent capital gains, the stock offers a wide margin of safety to factor in ongoing heightened geopolitical risks.

Notably, a continuation of the conflict in the Middle East, which presently seems highly likely, could prompt IAG to cancel additional flights. Its actions in this area have already contributed to a 0.1 per cent decline in seat capacity in the first half of the year, and the group is anticipating that seat capacity will flatline, versus a previous forecast of a 2 to 4 per cent rise, in the full year.

Elevated geopolitical risks in the Middle East could also prompt a further rise in jet fuel prices. They are already up 63 per cent on their level from the start of the year and, even though IAG stated in its half-year results that it expects to recover about 60 per cent of the higher fuel cost via price increases and efficiencies, it would still act as a drag on the company's financial performance.

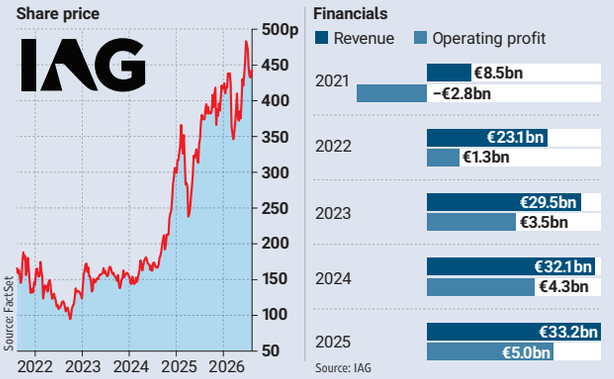
IAG, though, has the financial means to overcome a period of industry-related challenges. Its half-year results, for instance, showed that it had a net debt-to-equity ratio of 54 per cent, while net interest costs were covered 5.9 times by operating profits in the six-month period. The company' total liquidity, moreover, increased by €925 million year-on-year so that it is now in excess of €11.8 billion.

Clearly, no amount of cash will prevent IAG's share price from moving erratically in the coming months. Indeed, it is likely to display a significant amount of volatility as the outlook for the economy and geopolitical risks evolve.

Investors, though, should feel optimistic about the company's capacity to deliver FTSE 100-beating capital gains in the long run. Its wide margin of safety, solid fundamentals and upbeat industry outlook over a multi-year time horizon mean that it offers highly favourable investment prospects.

ADVICE Buy
WHY A wide margin of safety means there is scope for substantial capital growth over the long run

Soaring



ALAMY

Ocado was the biggest riser on the FTSE 250 after a positive note from the bank

JP Morgan delivers a boost to Ocado's shares

MARKET REPORT

Along with Aston Martin, Ocado Group is one of the most heavily traded and volatile stocks on the FTSE 250 (Robert Miller writes).

Yesterday, shares in the company comfortably topped the leaderboard of the more UK-focused index with a rise of 34½p, or 15.6 per cent, to 255p, after a favourable note from JP Morgan, the heavyweight US investment bank.

"We continue to view the risk/reward as highly attractive (although volatility is likely to remain) and reiterate our 'overweight' rating," Marcus Diebel, an analyst, said in a research note. JPMorgan has set a new price target for Ocado of 290p, up from 245p. For the record, **Aston Martin** rose ½p, or 1.7 per cent, to 35½p, but the shares are still down by 4.6 per cent in the past month.

Those gains helped the FTSE 250 to finish higher again with a rise of 15.13 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 24,814.88, not far off Friday's record close of 24,854.86. A tier above, the FTSE 100 did not fare so well, closing down for a third consecutive session with a fall of 11.04 points, or 0.1 per cent, to 10,833.15.

Supermarkets played their role on the negative side with **Tesco**, down 9p, or 2 per cent, at 452½p after a downbeat note from Clive Black, head of consumer research at Shore Capital. After a promising start in which the veteran retail analyst praised "an outstanding management team [that] has executed retail delivery with excellent consistency and strong capital discipline ... making for attractive total shareholder returns" he downgraded the stock from "buy" to "hold" with a promise to return for a fresh look at a later date.

The Tesco downgrade was certainly a dampener on the stock but the wider supermarket was under a cloud in any case after the Food and Drink Federation warned on Tuesday that crop shortages and price increases are "inevitable". Rival **J Sainsbury** was down 6½p, or 1.9 per cent, at 338p. **Marks & Spencer**, which also has a big presence in the food market, was the second biggest faller on the FTSE 100, down 16¼p, or 4 per cent, to 385¾p, but then there might be an element of profit taking as the stock has risen nearly 17 per cent since the start of the year.

The top performer was **Admiral Group**, up 108p, or 2.9 per cent, at £38.28 as UBS reiterated a "buy" recommendation with a target of £43.

Wall Street report

Indices were mixed despite mild inflation data reinforcing bets the Federal Reserve will hold rates steady and AI-related stocks being back in favour. Cloud company CoreWeave's upbeat results lifted the stock 19.3 per cent while chip maker Nvidia, also an investor in CoreWeave, was up 3 per cent. The S&P 500 rose 20.30 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 7,748.50 as the Nasdaq gained 143.04 points, or 0.5 per cent, at 26,588.49. The Dow Jones industrial average, fell 21.58 points, or 0.04 per cent, at 53,770.27.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Admiral Group	2.9%
InterContinental Hotels Group	2.7%
3i Group	2.6%
Endeavour Mining	2.5%
Fresnillo	2.3%
Relx	-2.6%
IG Group	-2.6%
Reckitt Benckiser	-2.8%
Marks & Spencer	-4.0%
Burberry	-4.2%

NEWS IN BRIEF

Whitbread to sell 53 sites

Whitbread has struck a deal to sell off dozens more restaurants as it focuses on its higher-margin hotels business. The FTSE 100 owner of Premier Inn is to offload 53 eateries to Queensway Inns, a Newcastle-based hospitality business, for an undisclosed price.

Dominic Paul, the chief executive, first announced plans to hive off some of its struggling restaurants two years ago. His initial plan was to close 238 diners, which trade mainly under the Beefeater and Brewers Fayre brands. Of those 238 restaurants, 112 are being converted into extra bedrooms and 126 sites will be sold.

Whitbread said in March that 51 had been sold so far. The Queensway deal puts the company a step closer to completing the disposals programme.

In April, Whitbread announced it would shut the remainder of its 197-strong restaurant portfolio, with 110 sold as going concerns and 87 converted into new rooms. The latest closures are expected to affect 3,800 jobs. Queensway's acquisition could result in 900 jobs being saved.

Premier Inn is Britain's biggest hotel brand, delivering high margins and returns that the restaurant division had failed to match.

The future of the remaining restaurant sites remains uncertain. Queensway plans to rebrand and relaunch sites as affordable pubs but the brand name, menu and opening dates have not been confirmed.

EasyJet attendants strike

EasyJet flight attendants in France will go on strike on August 15 and 16 to demand better working conditions, their trade unions said yesterday. "Any flight cancellations or disruptions resulting from these days of action will be solely attributable to easyJet, which has chosen not to give a serious response to the repeated warnings over the past months," the unions said. EasyJet said it had made an offer to tackle the concerns of its staff and asked the unions to call off the strike as more talks were scheduled in September. EasyJet will offer passengers options such as free transfers and refunds.

Card payment scam alert

Concerns about a "dangerous" scam where victims are being tricked into approving card payments have been raised by Which? The consumer group warned that criminals may use similar tactics to those in authorised push-payment scams, where people are manipulated into making a bank transfer. Many "authorised" scams involve people sending money to fraudsters directly from their bank accounts. Which? said people may struggle to claim for payments they have authorised to a legitimate company, even if the money ultimately ends up in the hands of a criminal.

Ancora sticks to its offer

The activist investor Ancora Holdings said that it has proposed to buy HB Fuller's building adhesives division for as much as $1.2 billion in cash. Ancora said it had privately re-engaged with HB Fuller's chief executive and chairman in early July for a deal, but had not received a substantive reaction. "We fear your collective preference for entrenchment is once again impairing your judgment," the activist investor said in a letter. Earlier this year, HB Fuller agreed to buy Advanced Medical Solutions, the UK medical supplier, in a cash deal valuing it at about £715 million, including debt.

Business

EQUITY PRICES

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by ICE Data Services. The yield is the sum of a company's annual 12-month dividend payments divided by the last day's closing share price.
12-month high and low High/low prices for UK equities and investment trusts are based on intra-day figures.

Automobiles & Part

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
86¾	33¾	Aston Martin Lag	35½	+ ⅝	...	-0.7

Banking & Finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
265	177½	**Aberdeen Group**	250¾	+ 1⅝	5.8	11.6
1¼	0⅝	Acuity RM♦	0⅝		...	-3.4
4006	2624	**Admiral**	3828	+ 108	3.7	15.5
662½	414⅜	AJ Bell	613	+ 3	2.4	23.9
28761⅛	22372¾	AON Corp‡	26108	- 412⅜	0.9	...
1130	799	Arbuthnot♦	830	+ 20	6.6	7.6
276½	145⅞	Ashmore Group	223¾	- ¾	7.6	18.4
2126½	1508⅜	Australia & NZ	1904⅞	- 9¾	6.0	18.7
717⅜	590⅝	**Aviva**	704	+ 7	5.6	26.2
1121⅞	685¼	Banco Santander	1098	+ 4	1.5	14.1
554⅛	352⅞	**Barclays**‡	519⅜	+ 3⅜	2.2	11.9
17½	4	Blue Star Capital♦	4¼		...	-2.2
710	613	BP Marsh & Ptnrs♦	676	- 14	5.4	5.1
363⅜	212	Bridgepoint Grp	338⅝	- 6⅜	2.8	67.7
352	264⅝	Chesnara	333	- 1	6.8	-65.9
492	349	City of London Grp	482	- 3	6.8	16.2
563½	318⅜	Close Bros	424	+ 2¾	...	-6.3
753	203	CMC Markets‡	694	- 6	2.0	25.2
2957⅝	2057	Deutsche Bank	2846	+ 15¼	3.0	10.5
93	74	EFG-Hermes Hldgs	74		0.9	...
240¼	136	EPE Special Opps♦	211		...	8.7
85	52	Fiske♦	67½		1.7	5.9
92	80	Foresight Ventures VCT	83		4.3	15.5
4700	2215	Georgia Capital	4470	+ 60	...	2.8
57	43¼	Hansard Global	52		8.6	40.0
230	194	Helios U/W♦	223½	+ ½	4.5	7.7
1904	1257⅛	**Hiscox**	1800	+ 20	2.2	13.5
1610	928⅛	**HSBC**	1537¾	+ 13⅝	3.6	17.2
1956	1016	**IG Group**	1354	- 36	3.1	9.3
204	90⅞	Impax Asset Mgmt♦	116	+ 4	8.6	7.3
2340	1424⅞	**ICG**	2052		4.2	12.3
145¾	115⅝	Intl Public P'ship	143		6.1	-12.6
690	499⅜	**Investec**	670½	+ ½	5.7	8.7
76	60	Investment Co	76¼	+ ¼	...	...
73¾	48	IP Group	71¾	+ ⅝	1.8	9.9
24	6½	Jarvis Securities♦	7¾	- ¼	45.2	2.4
214½	113⅜	Jupiter Fund Mgmt‡	160⅝	- ⅜	3.7	8.4
700	549	Lancashire Hldgs‡	593½	+ 5	2.8	6.6
318⅛	217¼	**Legal & General**	302⅝	+ 1	7.2	30.3
13190	6905	**Lion Finance Group**	12720	+ 90	2.5	8.9
385	223	Liontrust Asset Mgmt	318	+ 5	6.0	20.6
61	35	Livermore Invs Grp♦	37⅜		8.4	16.8
117⅞	77⅜	**Lloyds Banking**‡	115¼	+ 1⅜	3.5	16.5
22	14	LMS Capital	15	- ½	26.7	...
10140	6684	**London Stock Exchange**	8752	- 54	1.8	36.7
367⅛	247	**M&G**	351⅜	+ 1	5.8	27.9
327¼	154¼	Man Group‡	314⅝	+ 1¾	4.0	27.6
39¾	20	Manx Financial Grp♦‡	24		2.1	4.4
10	1¼	Marechale Capital♦	5	+ ⅜	...	-15.6
185⅝	98¼	Metro Bank	176¼	+ 3¼	...	22.6
2621¼	1864⅝	National Australia	2142½	- 16⅜	4.2	18.5
726	500¼	**NatWest Group**	714⅝	+ 7¼	4.9	13.4
842⅝	438⅜	PayPoint	592½	- 6½	6.7	10.0
1238	910¼	**Prudential**	1012	- ½	1.9	8.9
1¼	0⅜	Quantum Blockchain♦	0⅜		...	-2.0
209	150¾	Quilter	199⅝	- ⅛	3.2	22.4
2500	1580	Rathbones Group	1694	- 8	5.9	15.7
325	245	Rockwood Strategic	316	- 2	...	0.0
2458½	1620	S & U	1937½	- 7½	5.9	9.9
3	0¼	Sancus Lending♦	1⅛		...	7.2
59⅛	42¼	Schroder REIT	45½	+ ⅝	7.9	...
599½	358⅝	**Schroders**‡	583	+ ½	3.8	17.1
1575½	1038¾	**St James's Place**‡	1183	+ 6½	1.5	11.8
2278	1285	**Standard Chart'd**‡	2225	+ 7	2.3	15.4
948½	615	**Standard Life**	914	+ 12	6.1	-194.1
6347⅛	4246½	Sun Life Canada	5952⅝	- 16½	3.4	...
6¾	2¾	Tavistock Invs♦	3		3.3	2.5
5200	3615	TBC Bank Grp	4838	- 10	5.3	6.8
1¾	0¼	Tern♦	1¼	- ⅛	...	-1.5
60	40⅛	Time Finance♦	52½		...	8.3
0⅜	0⅛	Tooru♦	0¼		...	-1.8
4	1½	Truetide♦	3¼	- ⅛	...	-5.8
132	77⅛	Vanquis Banking Gp	78¼	- 1¼	...	24.5
2800	2000	Volvere♦	2110		...	11.2
7239⅝	5453⅛	Wells Fargo‡	6559⅝	+ 85⅞	2.3	...
2275⅜	1631¼	Westpac Bkg Corp	1851½	- 15	4.4	17.6
31¾	23	Worsley Investors	28⅜		...	...
57550	49947¼	Zurich Insurance	53749¼	+ 42¼	5.1	18.4

Construction & Property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
370	181	Alumasc♦	220	- 1	5.0	8.5
6⅝	4½	Aseana Properties	4¾		...	1.2
2½	1¼	Built Cybernetics♦	1⅝		...	-160.0
973	544	Balfour Beatty	926½	+ 61	1.6	17.6
410¼	235⅜	**Barratt Redrow**	321	+ 1¾	5.3	23.6
2890	1715	Bellway	2146	+ 8	3.4	16.2
4442	2796	Berkeley	3548	- 8	...	10.7
1208	800½	Big Yellow Grp	894½	- 8	5.3	...
460	233	Billington Hldgs♦	417½		2.6	40.1
237	133½	Boot (Henry)	156	+ 1	5.0	8.9
383¾	271⅜	Breedon	350⅜	+ 1⅝	4.4	14.5
451⅝	318⅝	**British Land**	435¾	+ ¼	5.3	...
2900	2500	Cardiff Property	2750		1.1	20.7
2196	1469⅜	Derwent London	2076	+ 8	3.9	...
5½	4⅛	DCI Advisors♦	4¾		...	-2.8
19½	11	First Property♦	12½		2.0	6.9
75	29	Fletcher King♦	42½		5.3	28.7
62	31¾	Foxtons Group‡	37¼		3.1	8.7
632	407½	Galliford Try Hldgs	620		3.2	18.4
391½	241	Genuit Group	283⅝	- 4⅜	4.5	15.6
435	221	Gleeson (MJ)	279	+ 6½	3.9	10.3
1051¼	788⅝	Grafton Grp Units	1036¾	+ 1¾	3.6	14.8
208½	149½	Grainger	175	+ 1⅛	4.8	6.4
377	270	Great Portland Est	356⅜	+ 3⅝	2.3	0.0
391¾	263⅜	Hammerson	380	+ 1⅜	4.8	...
183	116¾	Harworth Group	180	+ ⅜	1.0	62.1
400	225	Heath (Samuel)♦	215	- 45	6.1	26.9
240½	180⅝	Helical	205	- 2	1.3	42.4
149⅝	87⅝	Ibstock	92	+ 2½	2.2	...
161½	112	James Halstead♦	131¾	+ ¼	6.8	13.6
3518	1238	Keller	3122	+ 74	2.6	15.4
8988⅜	8723½	Kingspan Group	8783⅜		0.5	27.8
726	522½	**Land Securities**	708	+ 6	5.8	...
216¼	175¼	**LondonMetric Prop**	192⅞	- ⅛	6.5	...
25⅝	4¾	Macau Prop Opp Fd	6⅛		...	-0.4
209½	124	Marshalls	173	+ ⅞	4.0	30.4
106	66	Michelmersh Brick♦	76	+ 1½	6.1	18.9
1	0⅜	Mindflair♦	0½		...	-1.4
5730	3915	Morgan Sindall	4502	+ 52	3.6	12.1
10200	8350	Mountview Estates‡	8750		6.0	16.8
85	65¾	NewRiver REIT	82	+ ⅝	8.2	...
234	160	Palace Capital	183	+ 3	8.2	40.7
320	261	Panther Securities♦	296		4.1	12.1
1552	947⅜	**Persimmon**	1169½	+ 6½	5.1	13.1
24	15	Plaza Centers	14½		...	-0.1
109⅝	87⅜	Primary Health Props‡	95⅛	+ ¼	7.7	...
33⅜	28	Real Estate Inv♦	30⅞		4.9	-61.8
849½	578¾	Safestore	618½	- 2	5.0	...
1126	791½	Savills	981	+ 7	3.4	18.9
5½	0¼	Secure Prop Dev & Inv♦	0½		...	-0.1
997⅜	603	**Segro**‡	957	+ 5	3.3	...
160⅛	124⅛	Shaftesbury Capital	149⅜	+ 4⅜	2.9	8.0
12⅛	6¾	SIG	8½	- ⅛	...	-1.6
153	105	SigmaRoc♦	134¼	+ 1⅜	...	18.4
113	86¾	Sirius Real Estate	96⅞	- ⅜	5.6	7.5
140	106	Smart (J)	112½		2.9	8.6
23¾	16	Steppe Cement♦	22		...	19.7
116⅞	74⅛	Taylor Wimpey	85⅛	+ ⅝	4.9	30.4
140	104	Town Centre	130½	- 1½	3.8	...
723½	493⅜	Travis Perkins	649½	- 11½	1.8	-7.8
175	132¼	**Tritax Big Box**	162¼	- ½	5.1	...
745	442¼	Unite Group	526	+ ½	7.2	...
746⅜	220	Vistry Group	263¼	+ 6	...	6.2
434⅜	312	Workspace Group	365	+ 2	7.2	...
930	730	Wynnstay Props♦	915	+ 20	3.1	12.7

Consumer Goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
229	106⅛	AEP Plantations	176⅝	+ 2⅜	3.4	10.3
30	17⅝	Airea♦	26½		3.8	10.4
2359	1729½	**AB Foods**	2043	- 30	3.1	14.4
715⅜	589	Barr (AG)	602	- 4	3.1	14.2
5326	3677	**British Amer Tob**‡	4150	- 52	5.9	11.8
1376½	976	**Burberry Group**	1120½	- 49½	...	...
181¼	85⅜	C&C Group	96⅝	- 1⅝	5.1	...
5⅞	2¾	Capital Metals♦	4¼		...	-35.5
460	271	Churchill China♦	385	- 5	5.5	9.7
5195	3270	**Coca-Cola HBC**	4604	- 10	2.2	20.8
1515¾	821	Colefax♦	1450	- 5	0.4	10.3
5810	4775	Cranswick‡	5190	- 10	2.2	17.5
2142	1295½	**Diageo**	1732	- 34	2.1	30.0
0¼	0	Distil♦	0		...	-0.5
1918	1160	Evans (M.P.)♦	1682	+ 32	3.6	10.4
151½	114½	Fevara	143	+ 1	1.7	6.2
23540	14070	**Games Workshop**	18990	- 240	3.0	30.4
2185⅜	1028⅝	Glanbia	2016⅜	- 51⅜	1.9	37.2
307½	191⅛	Greencore	260⅜	- 2¾	1.0	19.7
79¾	4⅝	Headlam	10¾	+ ½	...	-0.1
861	447⅞	Hilton Food	605	- 10	5.8	6.9
3632	2595	**Imperial Brands**	2598	- 30	6.4	10.3
7646⅜	5567¾	Kerry Group	7108⅝	+ 85⅛	1.7	20.8
170	106¼	McBride	163⅜	- ¼	1.8	8.4
210	85	Mulberry Group♦	205	+ 15	...	-15.8
1275	880	Nichols♦‡	1065	+ 10	3.7	18.2
374	252	Norcros	325	- 3	3.5	...
379	309	Origin Ents♦	366		4.0	8.6
1	0¼	PACSCo♦	0⅜		...	-0.0
138	47⅛	Portmeirion♦	50½	+ ½	...	-1.1
1½	0½	Provexis♦	1⅛		...	-55.8
114	65⅛	PZ Cussons	106	- 4	3.5	22.6
138	92	REA	111	+ 1	...	-214.2
210	155	Tandem♦	190	+ 1½	1.6	12.3
330	220	The Character Grp♦	315		2.2	-46.7
10	5	Ukrproduct Grp♦	6½		...	-15.1
5542⅛	3644	**Unilever**‡	4570½	- 36	3.6	12.4
86	19½	Victoria♦	58¼	- ¾	...	-0.2

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
59⅛	10	Assoc Brit Eng	20		...	-6.9
2180	1458	Avon Technologies‡	1920	- 14	1.0	74.3
1527	902⅜	**Babcock**	1205	+ 14	0.6	28.6
2360	1529	**BAE Systems**	2270	+ 40	1.7	33.0
1500	500	Braime A N/V♦	1200		1.4	6.4
2295	1376	Braime Group♦	2350		0.7	12.5
550	350	Caffyns	448	+ 48	2.2	-11.0
0½	0⅛	Cap XX Ld♦	0⅛		...	-3.6
340	202¼	Castings‡	300	- 8	6.1	17.3
27	12⅜	Checkit♦	21		...	-8.1
650¾	446½	Chemring Group	631½	- 5	1.3	35.5
55	28⅛	Chesterfield Spec Cyl♦	34½		...	-38.3
1538	881⅛	Cohort♦	1356	- 26	1.3	26.0
534⅝	171	Dialight	520		...	...
15	5¾	Feedback♦	6		...	-0.2
1270	463⅛	Gooch & Housego♦	1220		1.1	89.1
28500	9020	Goodwin	19920	- 230	1.4	60.9
4902	3194	**Halma**‡	3764	+ 46	0.7	38.2
3220	1956	Hill & Smith	2935	- 150	...	28.6
2¾	1	Image Scan♦	2⅝		...	-12.4
3166	2216	**IMI**	3148	+ 24	1.1	25.3
7000	3480	Judges Sci.♦	4150	- 50	2.8	50.2
90	34	LPA♦	82½		...	-31.2
685	409⅞	**Melrose**	493¼	+ 5⅞	1.5	17.0
261	179¾	Morgan Advanced	252½	- 1	4.8	33.7
405	200	Mpac♦	330		...	-10.4
1800	1120	MS Intl♦	1585		1.6	23.5
3318	1682	Oxford Instruments‡	2926	+ 4	0.8	34.6
2413⅜	1779⅛	Phillips Elec	1966⅞	- 37⅝	3.7	-46.0
4⅛	1	PipeHawk♦	2⅛		...	-3.0
5490	2930	Renishaw	5290	+ 20	1.5	45.9
1586	990	**Rolls-Royce**‡	1546	+ 13	0.7	22.3
489¼	286⅜	Rotork	487	+ ⅝	1.7	35.3
105	60	SDI Group♦	90		...	19.1
318⅛	161	Senior	292½		0.7	-286.8
2032¼	2009	SKF Group	2028⅜		3.0	30.3
2754⅛	2088	**Smiths**	2647	+ 5	1.8	30.9
215	135	Solid State♦	182½	- 3½	1.5	25.3
247	170	Somero Enter♦	245	+ 5	3.1	17.4
8050	5950	**Spirax Group**	7215	- 10	2.4	32.5
7½	3½	Tanfield♦	4¼	- ¼	...	-4.1
320	240	Thorpe FW♦	258	- 1	2.8	11.9
142¾	47	Transense Tech♦	47½	- 1	...	5.1
507½	350	Vesuvius	401¾	- 1¼	5.9	19.0
710	325	Volex	569	+ 3	0.8	21.8
3580	2254	**Weir**	2762	+ 32	1.5	28.9
2060	843	XP Power	1762	- 34	...	-42.0

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
284½	187	Advanced Medical♦	281½		1.0	60.9
12⅛	5	Allergy Therapeutics♦	5¼		...	-6.2
8	0⅞	CelLBxHealth♦	1⅜		...	-0.2
580	377½	Anpario♦	510	- 5	2.5	12.7
15732	9892	**AstraZeneca**‡	11702	- 142	2.0	24.0
3¾	1⅝	Cambridge Nutri Sci♦	1⅞		...	2.6
259¼	193	**Convatec**	233¼	- 1	2.4	36.6
36	20	Potter & Moore♦‡	23½		2.3	7.7
116⅞	72	Eco Animal Health♦	102½	+ 5½	...	31.4
32	21¾	EKF Diagnostics♦	26	+ ⅞	...	55.3
10½	0¼	Futura Medical♦	0½	+ ⅛	...	-0.2
3228¾	1943	Genus	2256	- 40	1.5	77.0
2282	1288⅝	**GSK**	1869	- 27	3.7	13.2
0¼	0⅛	Gunsynd♦	0⅛		...	-2.1
416⅛	274⅜	**Haleon**	359⅞	- 5½	2.0	19.3
1865	1187	Hikma Pharma	1647	+ 9	3.9	12.2
266	150½	Hutchmed China♦	181	- 2½	...	4.6
19⅜	1⅜	ImmuPharma♦	3⅝	- ⅛	...	-9.7
32	12¼	Inspiration Health♦	18½		...	-15.9
15	6¼	IXICO♦	7½	+ ¼	...	-4.1
1	0⅜	Thalia Therapeutics♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
77⅝	53⅞	NIOX Group♦	64	- ⅝	2.4	37.9
CHF131.50	96.03	Novartis	CHF124.20	- 1.66	3.0	40.5
962	423½	Oxford Biomedica	492½	+ 5½	...	-18.3
0¾	0¼	Physiomics♦	0½		...	-2.6
4⅜	1¼	Proteome Sciences♦	1¾		...	-1.7
6522⅞	3664	**Reckitt Benck**‡	5138	- 146	4.2	11.0
28⅞	10⅜	RUA Life Sci♦	27	+ 2½	...	-115.9
29	9½	Sareum Holdings♦	25½	+ 2	...	-10.6
1441½	1050	**Smith & Neph**	1093½	- 14½	2.7	20.5
256½	140¾	Spire Healthcare	230		0.7	56.1
14	5	Talisman Metals♦	6¼		...	1.8
0⅞	0⅛	ValiRx♦	0⅛		...	-0.3

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
79⅞	58⅛	Accsys Tech♦	71	- 1⅜	...	31.1
4780½	3665⅛	BASF	4401	+ 26¼	4.4	28.3
4606¾	2203	Bayer	4105⅜	- 85⅝	0.2	-13.1
98⅛	71¾	Coats Group	84	- ¾	2.9	19.2
3352	2426¾	**Croda**	3268	- 6	3.4	73.6
460	230	Cropper (James)♦	440	- 10	...	14.3
195⅜	136	Elementis	184	- 2¼	1.8	-31.9
110	6¼	Hardide♦	88½	- 2½	...	...
3775	2095	International Paper	3045	- 5	4.5	-7.6
2434	1731⅞	Johnson Matthey	2212	+ 28	3.5	-38.7
1083	660	Mondi	897¼	- 5¾	1.4	28.1
169⅞	110	Robinson♦	132½	+ 5	4.5	9.7
993½	597	Swire Pacific	970¾	- 15⅛	3.9	47.4
12⅛	5½	Symphony Enviro♦	8	- ¼	...	-7.4
124	16¾	Synthomer	104	+ ¼	...	-1.1
2858¼	2026⅝	Takeda Pharma	2585⅞	- 11½	3.7	-57.5
831	515	Victrex	817	+ 1	7.3	25.5
430	320	Wynnstay♦	372½		4.8	37.7
479⅞	318½	Zotefoams	428	- 11	1.9	9.2

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
451	231	Accesso Tech♦	300		...	14.5
260	160	Celtic♦	204		...	5.7
221⅝	164	Domino's Pizza	200¼	+ ¼	5.7	13.3
967¼	500⅜	**Entain**	560	+ 5¼	3.5	-5.4
66⅜	19¾	Evoke	45⅝	+ ⅛	...	-0.4
52	29	Gaming Realms♦	31⅞	+ ⅞	...	15.7
310	210	Heavitree♦	300		2.2	5.5
244	130	Heavitree A♦	225		2.9	4.2
$175.70	116.00	**InterCont'l Hotels**	$159.75	+ 3.95	1.2	32.5
301½	223½	Mitch & Butlers	282	+ 2	...	9.5
297	129⅜	On The Beach	192⅝	+ 1	2.1	35.0
151¾	86	Rank Group	99¾	+ ⅛	3.0	10.5
219⅜	137¼	SSP	212⅜	+ 1⅜	2.1	-22.8
0⅝	0¼	Bow Street Group♦	0⅜		...	-0.3
828½	530½	Wetherspoon JD	813	+ 6½	1.5	13.6
3302	2098	**Whitbread**	2479	+ 14	3.9	20.1

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
76⅛	51⅛	Aeorema Comms♦	60		4.4	47.7
29	18	Altitude Group♦	24	+ ½	...	-96.0
115	70¼	Arcontech Group♦	79½		5.0	11.3
831¼	418⅝	**Autotrader**	525⅝	- 3	2.2	15.4
690	435	Bloomsbury Pub‡	633	- 9	2.6	19.1
3½		Caledonian Hldgs♦	1⅞	+ ¼	...	-0.1
60	40	Catalyst Media♦	42½		...	23.1
0⅝	0⅛	Catenai♦	0⅛		...	-3.0
22	9	Ebiquity♦	9⅜		...	-0.9
785½	262¼	Future	320¼	- 8¾	5.3	5.1
154	60⅝	GlobalData	86⅞	+ 1	1.7	19.8
110	44	IG Design Group♦	95½	- 3½	1.0	-0.8
1000	719	**Informa**‡	910⅝	+ 8¾	2.5	...
87⅜	65¾	ITV	71⅜	+ ½	7.0	12.1
220	98½	ME Group	118⅝	+ 1⅝	7.1	7.9
0⅛	0⅛	Mediazest♦	0⅛		...	13.8
27	12	Mission Group♦	18		...	-0.8
220¼	139¾	Mony Group‡	202¾	+ ⅜	6.2	13.3
2341⅜	1624⅜	News Corp A	2107½	- 2¼	0.7	...
2606⅞	1891½	News Corp B	2405⅞	- 21½	0.6	...
439½	217	Next 15 Group♦	324½	+ 2	4.7	-10.8
1337	874¾	**Pearson**	1192½	- 11	2.1	23.2
4½	3	Primorus Inv♦	3⅜		...	5.0
75⅜	40⅛	Reach‡	42¼	- ½	13.9	-1.0
59	40	React♦	41		...	-28.3
3634	1991	**Relx**‡	2541	- 67	2.7	22.6
792⅝	391⅜	Rightmove	491	+ 6⅜	2.2	17.5
270	130	SpaceandPeople♦	137½		...	6.4
131	95⅝	STV Group	109	+ 4	...	-10.1
459⅞	170½	System1 Group♦	325		1.8	31.2
4777⅞	4682⅛	21st Cent Fox A	4682⅛		0.9	...
3349¼	3298	21st Cent Fox B	3349¼		1.3	...
369	230	Wilmington	277	+ 2	4.2	21.5
412⅝	218½	WPP	399⅛	- 3¼	3.8	7.9
71½	40	Zinc Media♦	57½		...	-5.6

Natural Resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	ADM Energy#	0		...	1.2
17⅞	8⅛	H-Power♦	11⅜	+ ½	...	-4.7
89⅜	36¾	Afentra♦	72¼	- ⅝	...	-69.7
0	0	Arkadian Strat Metals♦	0		...	-1.1
0¼	0⅛	Alien Metals♦	0⅛		...	-14.1
2⅞	1	Aminex	1⅛		...	-12.9
8924	3349⅞	Anglo Amer Plat	6794⅞	+ 166⅞	6.8	25.2
4239	2115	**Anglo Amer**	4058	+ 37	0.7	-16.6
435	155	Anglo Asian Mng♦‡	412½	- 2½	0.7	35.9
4475	2045	**Antofagasta**	4029	+ 4	1.2	40.4
1¼	0⅜	Arc Minerals♦	0½		...	-1.1
2⅜	1¼	Ariana Resources♦	1½		...	-145.0
0⅞	0¼	Arkle Resources♦	0¾		...	-11.0
2¼	0⅞	Asiamet Resources♦	1⅝		...	-13.3
1094	481½	Atalaya Mine	957½	- 37	1.1	18.4
4¾	2½	Beacon Energy♦	3		...	-0.7
13	4	Beowulf Mining♦	10	- ½	...	-3.0

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	53770.27 (-21.58)
Nasdaq	26588.49 (+143.04)
S&P 500	7748.50 (+20.30)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	67524.06 (+553.84)
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	25440.17 (-212.65)
Amsterdam	
Amsterdam AEX	1112.28 (-4.49)
Sydney	
Australia AO	9404.70 (-39.00)
Frankfurt	
DAX	26331.07 (-60.35)
Singapore	
Singapore Straits	5720.75 (-33.42)
Brussels	
Brussels BEL20	5723.27 (+3.86)
Paris	
Paris CAC	8674.94 (-40.00)
Zurich	
Zurich SMI	14449.47 (-125.78)
Zurich DJ Euro Stoxx 50	6533.99 (-17.23)
London	
FTSE100	10833.15 (-11.04)
FTSE250	24814.88 (+15.13)
FTSE350	5907.61 (-4.96)
FTSE Eurotop 100	5108.75 (-18.17)
FTSE All Share	5843.10 (-4.80)
FTSE Non Financials	6381.24 (-25.15)
TechMark Focus	9565.68 (-51.37)
US$	1.3509 (nc)
Euro	1.1704 (nc)
SDR	0.9887 (nc)
CPI Jun (2015=100)	142.5
RPI Jun (1987=100)	416.5
RPIX Jun (1987=100)	409.7

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	26-Sep	87	87.49	86.96	87.09	186868	1327314
	26-Dec	87.05	87.37	87	87.05	44	2111
	27-Mar				86.97	0	
3-Mth Sonia Index	26-Jun	96.25	96.255	96.25	96.2525	13805	396296
	26-Sep	96.15	96.165	96.145	96.145	69430	430949
	26-Dec	95.945	95.975	95.935	95.94	85493	533831
	27-Mar	95.795	95.845	95.78	95.79	70120	391415
3 Mth Sonia Index	27-Jun	95.725	95.79	95.715	95.725	67110	387380
	27-Sep	95.71	95.78	95.7	95.715	64281	247459
	27-Dec	95.73	95.8	95.72	95.735	60966	292465
3-Mth Euribor	26-Sep	97.405	97.415	97.4	97.4	81508	659673
	26-Dec	97.25	97.27	97.24	97.245	141654	951040
	27-Mar	97.14	97.17	97.13	97.14	115260	472127
	27-Jun	97.085	97.125	97.075	97.095	113718	482183
	27-Sep	97.08	97.125	97.065	97.09	122047	441357
3-Mth Saron Index	26-Jun	100.045	100.0475	100.045	100.0475	183	70603
	26-Sep	100.045	100.045	100.04	100.04	2058	75491
	26-Dec	99.985	99.995	99.98	99.98	5089	52099
	27-Mar	99.88	99.9	99.875	99.88	4604	34267
	27-Jun	99.785	99.815	99.785	99.79	3172	24658
	27-Sep	99.715	99.745	99.71	99.725	1950	26193
	27-Dec	99.655	99.69	99.65	99.675	1613	19692
FTSE100	26-Sep	10817.5	10869.5	10811	10824	52240	478825
	26-Dec	10890	10925.5	10883.5	10891.5	508	799
FTSEurofirst 80	26-Sep				8934.9	0	
	26-Dec				8981.3	0	

Tradeweb

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Commodities

Natural Gas $

2.799	+0.032

Light Crude Oil

83.3	+0.1

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

WTI SEP 26	83.32	0.12
WTI OCT 26	82.06	0.11
WTI NOV 26	80.29	-0.02
WTI DEC 26	78.44	-0.14
WTI JAN 27	76.75	-0.36

Products

Fuel Oil	478.95	-0.993
Euro Naphtha	743.183	-4.059

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Sep1256.5-1256.25	Jan1044.5-1044
Oct1201-1200.75	Feb1014.25-1013.75
Nov1142.5-1142.25	
Dec1083.75-1083.25	Volume: 202628

Brent

Oct88.71-88.7	Jan82.48-82.46
Nov86.5-86.49	Feb81.09-81.07
Dec84.27-84.26	Volume: 582697

Cocoa

Sep 4115 +40	Sep 4231 +45
Dec 4162 +50	Dec 4183 +45
Mar 4261 +47	Mar 4261 +47
May 4268 +44	May 4268 +44
Jul 4268 +45	Volume: 25664

Robusta Coffee

Sep 3760 -22	May 3655 -55
Nov 3739 -38	Jul 3639 -53
Jan 3721 -40	
May 3655 -55	Volume: 29188

White Sugar

Oct 512.9 +1.6	Aug503.2 +3.2
Dec 510.4 +0.4	Oct497.6 +4.6
May511.2 +1.6	
May511.2 +1.6	Volume: 31290

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov 201 +4	May207.75 +4.5
Jan 198.75	Jul 205.5
Mar 201	Volume: 8294

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
0⅛	0	Bezant Resources♦	0⅛		...	11.5
3495	1918	BHP Group	3354	+ 20	3.1	25.5
14	7⅝	Border & Sthn Pet♦	10¾	+ ¼	...	-91.2
122½	8⅜	Bougainville	9⅛	- 1½	...	-13.7
609⅜	399⅜	**BP**	530¾	- 5¼	4.7	...
0	0	Buccaneer Energy♦	0		...	-0.7
8¼	1¾	Cadence Minerals♦	4⅝		...	-8.8
5½	3	Cadogan Energy	3¾		...	-11.3
2900	1250	Caledonia Mining♦	1715	+ 65	2.4	8.2
3⅜	1¾	Caspian Sunrise#	1⅞		...	3.5
244	125¼	Cent Asia Metals♦	151	- 2	7.9	-4.8
2¼	1⅛	Chariot Ltd♦	1½		...	...
0	0	Clontarf Energy♦	0		...	-6.3
0½	0¼	Corcel♦	0⅜		...	-2.1
18½	8	Crism Therapeutics♦	10		...	-2.0
300½	108⅛	DRD Gold	180⅜	+ 2½	2.3	15.1
0½	0⅛	ECR Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-3.0
0⅛	0	Empyrean Energy♦	0		...	-0.4
5620	2410	**Endeavour**	4288	+ 105	3.1	20.7
28	9¾	EnQuest	24¼	- ½	3.3	...
6	2	Eurasia Mining♦	2⅜		...	16.0
2⅜	0⅝	Europa Oil & Gas♦	2	+ ⅛	...	-10.1
87¼	27¼	Ferrexpo#	28⅝		...	-4.5
4472	1617	**Fresnillo**	3016	+ 68	3.7	21.7
80	3	Galantas Gold♦	24	- ½	...	-6.5
12½	2⅞	GCM Resources♦	3⅜		...	-4.8
7½	2½	Gem Diamonds	3⅝	- ⅜	...	-0.1
3⅜	1⅝	Getech♦	3⅛		...	-7.5
707¼	281⅞	**Glencore**	572⅞	- 1¼	2.2	...
0½	0⅛	Geo Exploration♦	0⅛		...	-4.5
4582¾	2310¼	Gold Fields	3036¾	+ 50⅝	3.9	...
21	6½	Goldplat♦	18		2.9	30.0
2	0¼	Goldstone Res♦	0⅝		...	-0.9
800	230	Greatland Resources♦	662½	+ 15	...	19.9
353¾	176	Griffin Mining♦	290½	+ ½	...	32.4
235	160⅝	Gulf Keystone	177⅜	- 2	7.2	34.4
858	246¼	Hochschild	533	+ 11½	0.8	18.5
553	294	Hunting	478	+ 3½	2.0	24.6
0⅛	0	Ironveld♦	0		...	-2.1
219¾	57⅞	ITM Power♦	114¼	+ 2½	...	-15.4
5¼	2¼	Jubilee Metals♦	2¾	+ ⅛	...	-3.7
1⅛	0⅜	Karel Diamond Res♦	0⅝		...	-4.0
2⅛	0½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	1¼		...	-10.9
345	178⅜	Kenmare Res	202	- 8	...	-0.7
5⅞	1¾	Landore Res♦	1¾		...	-1.8
0⅛	0⅛	Lansdowne Resources♦	0⅛		...	-1.6
4⅞	2⅝	Lexington Gold♦	2¾		...	-28.1
19¼	10¼	Metals Exploration♦	14⅛	+ ¼	...	18.1
0⅞	0⅛	Nativo Resources♦	0⅛		...	-0.1
4½	1	Nostrum Oil & Gas	4		...	-0.0
0⅝	0⅛	Oriole Resources♦	0⅜		...	-16.0
		Ormonde Mining			...	...
41	11½	Orosur Mining♦	15¼	+ ½	...	...
190⅜	59¾	Pan African Res	113⅜	+ 2¼	1.9	21.4
33¼	6¾	Pantheon Res♦	16	+ 2¼	...	-56.8
27	12½	Parkmead Group♦	20½		...	3.1
22⅝	5¾	Petra Diamonds	6	+ ¼	...	-0.2
1⅛	0½	Petrel Resources♦	0⅞		...	-4.0
1⅝	0⅝	Petro Matad♦	1		...	-4.7
8⅞	2¾	Plexus Holdings♦	3⅝		...	-1.4
938	672	Porvair‡	890	+ 10	0.8	22.6
5⅛	2⅛	Prospex Energy♦	3⅝		...	-5.4
5	0⅞	Quadrise♦	1		...	-6.1
160	35	Reabold Resources♦	62½		...	-781.2
0	0	Red Rock Res♦	0		...	-0.3
10416¼	5324⅛	Rio Tinto Ltd	9392¼	- 13⅞	3.7	17.8
9117	4436½	**Rio Tinto**	7525	+ 28	4.6	16.6
0½	0⅛	Rome Resources♦	0⅜		...	-15.4
375	184¼	Serabi Gold♦	305	- 2½	1.6	5.8
302⅜	146	Serica Energy♦	245¾	- ¼	6.5	-25.5
3758½	2553¾	**Shell**	3322½	- 33½	4.5	14.8
7	2¼	Shuka Minerals♦	2¾		...	-2.0
13	1½	Sound Energy♦	1¾		...	-1.5
27	5½	Star Energy♦	23½	+ 1½	...	-4.2
4½	0⅞	Sunda Energy♦	1⅜		...	-1.4
0	0	Sunrise Resources♦	0		...	-2.8
0		Synergia Energy♦	0		...	0.5
0⅛	0	Tertiary Minerals♦	0⅛		...	-6.5
0⅞	0½	Thor Energy♦	0½		...	-0.6
7066	4293½	Total Eng SE	6453⅜	- 90⅞	4.6	12.7
0	0	Tower Resources♦	0		...	-0.4
19½	3½	Tullow Oil	14⅝	- ⅛	...	49.3
0	0	UK Oil & Gas♦	0		...	-0.2
13	2⅝	URU Metals♦	4		...	-2.7
0⅜	0⅛	Vast Resources#	0⅛		...	-0.5
9	1⅜	Westmount Energy♦	3⅛		...	-8.3
1½	0½	Xtract Resources♦	1¼		...	-5.3
4⅜	2¼	Zephyr Energy♦	3	- ¼	...	-7.1

Professional & Support Services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
5135	2980	4imprint	4784	- 106	3.7	16.0
615	464	Andrews Sykes♦	597½		4.3	13.8
130	103½	BTG Consulting♦	106½	+ ½	4.3	20.1
2886	1981	**Bunzl**	2754	- 52	2.7	19.5
416	215	Capita	259½	- 3	...	-1.8
49⅞	25	CEPS♦	40		...	-11.4
165	90	Christie Group♦	152½		2.3	30.0
2581⅛	2000	**Compass**	2441⅜	- 3¾	2.1	30.0
87	64½	Croma Security♦	70		3.4	12.2
6740	4188	**DCC Energy**	6375	+ 5	3.4	...
34	15	Diales Grp♦	33½	+ 1½	4.5	25.8
7765	4970	**Diploma**	7420	- 120	0.9	53.8
840	505	DiscoverIE	819	+ 1	1.6	27.1
115¼	78⅜	Essentra	108⅝	- 2⅜	1.9	...
3987	2203	**Experian**	2829	- 45	1.8	23.2
330	110	FIH Group♦	140		4.8	-3.4
850	588	Hargreaves Servs♦	796	- 4	5.0	8.5
5855	3519⅜	**Intertek**	5845	+ 5	2.8	26.8
250¾	163½	Int'l Workplace	177⅛	- 6	0.6	...
172⅛	123¾	Johnson Service	147¼	+ ¼	3.3	15.8
554	360	Journeo♦	498		...	20.5
256	178⅝	Kier Group	251¾	+ 2	3.1	19.7
1170	910	Latham (J)♦‡	1070	+ 5	3.4	11.6
3700	2100	London Security♦	3650		2.7	18.8
298	204	LSL Property Servs	256	+ 2	4.5	15.4
99	59¾	Macfarlane	70	- 3¼	5.2	17.5
190	64½	Maintel Holdings♦	67½	+ 3½	...	-5.7
28	15¼	Malvern Intl♦	21½		...	-2.8
460	310	Mears Group	435½	- 8	4.2	7.8
282¼	101¼	Michael Page	194½	+ ⅜	2.4	67.1
214	134¾	Mitie Group‡	206¼		2.2	31.2
15¾	0¾	MobilityOne#	6¾		...	-2.1
137	71⅛	Newmark Security♦	110		...	15.6
260	170	Norman Broadbent♦	187½	+ 2½	...	5.9
158	84⅞	Northern Bear♦	127½	+ 1	5.9	4.2
187½	110	NWF Group♦	151		5.8	8.1
66	42	PCI-PAL♦	62¾	- ¼	...	...
12½	7	Petards♦	10		...	-14.9
12⅞	7	PHSC♦	7¾		...	-2.6
0¾	0⅛	PowerHouse Energy♦	0¼		...	-3.1
64	41⅜	Record	44⅞	- ⅞	8.0	11.5
978	772	Renew Holdings♦	916	+ 4	2.2	14.9
507	329⅝	**Rentokil**	359⅞	- ⅝	2.6	26.1
310	222	Restore♦	303		2.4	-64.5
7	1½	River Global A♦‡	2½		...	-0.3
30	13⅝	Roebuck Food Group♦	26		...	-9.0
752½	536⅞	RS Group	723½	- 7½	3.2	20.9
150	85	RTC Group♦	90		7.5	6.4
121½	68	RWS Holdings♦	117⅞	- ¾	5.4	-4.4
612	520	Science Group♦	577		1.7	7.7
325¾	212¾	Serco	277¼	+ 7¾	1.7	19.3
79⅜	54	Smiths News	71¼	- ⅝	7.8	6.1
30	13¼	Software Circel♦	16¼	- ¼	...	-77.6
52½	36⅝	Staffline Group♦	46		...	11.8
295	132¼	SThree	284	- 3	5.0	20.7
350	146	Synectics♦	200		2.5	9.1
2	0½	Thruvision Group♦	1¼	- ⅛	...	-1.2
74	46	Tribal♦	63⅝	- ⅜	2.0	15.1
84¼	58	Vianet♦	66½		3.6	46.5
490	294½	ZIGUP	466½		5.8	13.8

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
117⅜	82½	AO World	97¾	- ¾	...	15.4
269¼	140	B&M European	237¼	+ 1⅜	4.0	14.6
115¾	58¼	Card Factory	74⅞	+ ¼	6.7	8.3
1648	1062	CVS Group	1294	- 8	0.7	17.6
204	113	DFS Furniture	155	- 2½	0.6	14.8
1248	707	Dunelm	878½	- 7½	8.0	11.4
840	598	Frasers Group	804½	+ 5½	...	9.3
2046	1407¼	Greggs	1847	- 45	3.7	15.4
250	123¾	Halfords	240½	- 2	3.7	15.8
981	713	**Howden Joinery**	818½	- 5½	2.7	16.6
895	640½	Inchcape‡	820½	- 7	4.1	11.3
1⅜	0⅜	Imaging Biometrics	0¾		...	-4.1
106⅛	64	**JD Sports**	91⅝	- ⅝	1.3	10.6
372¼	240¼	**Kingfisher**	322¼	- 1	3.8	23.0
418⅜	301⅛	**Marks & Spencer**	385¾	- 16⅛	1.1	30.4
4	0⅝	Mothercare♦	0¾	- ⅛	...	0.7
93¼	61¾	Naked Wines♦	70	- 2⅝	...	-7.6
15900	11200	**Next**	15330	- 255	1.7	20.2
376	140¼	Ocado	255	+ 34⅜	...	5.4
241⅝	167¼	Pets at Home	209⅝	+ 1¼	3.5	15.2
575	200	Pinewood Tech Group	430	- ½	...	89.6
747	183⅜	Saga	674	- 10	...	...
380¼	292¼	**Sainsbury's**	337⅞	- 6⅝	4.1	19.5
1120	378⅝	WH Smith	427	- 7¼	...	-3.8
14	4½	Sosandar♦	12¾	- ¼	...	91.1
510⅜	411⅛	**Tesco**	452½	- 9	3.2	16.5
50	30¼	Topps Tiles	36½	+ 1¼	8.5	12.0

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
252	140⅜	Alfa Financial	160	- 2⅜	6.0	15.7
307	195	Aptitude Software	207	+ 4	2.6	28.4
129	55	Bango♦	62½		...	-8.6
20	12	BATM Adv Coms	12½		...	-4.0
33	19⅞	Berkeley Res	25	+ ½	...	-65.4
3¼	1¼	Blackbird♦	1½		...	-2.4
194	74	Celebrus Tech♦‡	102½	- 1½	3.3	-114.4
28	12½	Cirata♦	14	+ ½	...	-3.2
0⅜	0⅛	CloudCoCo♦	0⅛		...	0.4
4962	2234	**Computacenter**	4828	- 22	1.5	33.0
286	173½	Concurrent Tech♦	245		0.5	41.8
13½	7½	Corero♦	8	- ¼	...	-108.1
2644	988	Craneware♦	1340	+ 2	2.5	32.2
110	50	Crimson Tide♦	87½		...	20.8
9⅞	5¾	CyanConnode Hldgs♦	9⅞		...	-8.4
15½	8	Dillistone Group♦	12	+ ½	...	-8.2
0½	0	Forgent♦	0		...	-0.0
165¾	94½	FDM Group	111¾	- 2	6.3	21.5
480	114	Filtronic♦	267	+ 11½	...	...
265	180⅝	GB Group	227	- 9½	1.9	-7.4
51	24	Ilika♦	24½	- ½	...	-6.1
138	56	Ingenta♦	67		6.7	5.6
178	73	Intercede♦	113½		...	19.9
28½	11⅛	Iomart♦	14⅛	+ ⅜	...	-1.7
72⅞	4⅝	IQE♦	48¾	+ 2⅛	...	-12.9
4453½	912⅝	LG Electronics	1458⅜		1.7	...
79	37	MTI Wireless♦	64	+ 1½	3.2	14.8
14¼	2	Nanoco Group	2¾	+ ¼	...	-2.4
138	94⅛	Netcall♦	118		0.8	48.2
36	22	Northamber♦	24½		2.4	-1.7
60⅜	37½	Oxford Metrics♦	40¼	+ 1¼	8.1	-73.3
31	17	Pennant Intl♦	28½		...	-5.7
447	210	Playtech	373⅜	- 2	...	0.9
50	32	Pulsar Group♦	32½	- 1½	...	-4.2
576½	398½	QinetiQ‡	563	- 8½	2.0	28.0
117	88	RM	101	+ 1⅝	...	38.8
6½	2⅜	Seeing Machines♦	5	- ⅛	...	-12.1
67	35½	Shearwater Group♦	57½	- 3½	...	-1.4
2024	1083	Softcat	1979	- 2	1.5	29.7
50	5	Sorted Group#	9		...	-0.2
1018½	575½	Tele Ericsson	763¾	+ 14⅛	3.0	11.5
1181	771⅝	**The Sage Grp**	1020	- 19½	2.2	27.0
91⅝	52½	Touchstar♦‡	82½		3.9	-6.2
435	280	Tracsis♦	327½		0.8	...
430	230	Triad Group‡	410		2.2	41.3
330	210	Water Intel♦	316	+ 10	...	14.9
150	96⅜	Xaar	117	- 1½	...	-27.2
17	8½	Zoo Digital♦	12¾	+ ½	...	-4.5

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
436¼	211⅝	**Airtel Africa**	324⅜	+ ⅜	1.6	23.6
242⅛	173	**BT Group**‡	195	- 1	4.3	17.7
169½	106	Currys	160⅛	- ¼	1.9	10.3
1186	687	Gamma Comms	968	- 8	2.3	13.9
247⅝	118	Helios Towers‡	207	+ 4⅜	0.9	75.6
0⅜	0⅛	Gana Media♦	0⅛		...	-3.1
1916	638	Telecom Plus‡	833	- 17	6.0	8.2
131⅛	83⅜	**Vodafone**	119⅜	+ 1	3.3	-84.7

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
260	203⅛	Braemar‡	223½	+ 1½	3.1	30.9
5485	3365	Clarkson	4896	- 54	2.3	22.9
683¾	332⅝	EasyJet	673	- ⅝	2.0	10.2
235⅝	152⅛	FirstGroup	182⅝	- ⅛	3.9	8.5
554	320	Fisher (James)	466	- 3	...	-53.6
492⅞	332¾	**Intl Cons Air**	442	+ 2	1.5	7.3
685	458	Irish Cont	672½	+ 7½	2.1	16.9
36	17	Mobico Group	26	+ ⅛	...	-1.1
7	1⅝	Sutton Harbour♦	4¼		...	-0.4
1453	832	Wizz Air	1070	- 8	...	...

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
220¼	151½	**Centrica**	155	+ ⅝	3.7	-103.4
937½	613⅞	Drax Group	733½	- 7	4.1	35.4
485	420	Jersey Electricity	435		5.0	12.1
1428½	1000	**National Grid**	1196½	+ 11	4.1	18.3
606	439⅜	Pennon‡	468	+ 4¼	6.3	24.1
3335	2381	**Severn Trent**	3106	+ 24	4.1	25.1
2767½	1597	**SSE**‡	2431	+ 33	2.8	23.0
1497	1072	**United Utilities**	1430	+ 21	3.8	16.6

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Forecast Yld%	P/E
4497	1825	**3i Group**	2813	+ 71	3.0	5.2
394½	325	3i Infrastructure	383	+ ½	3.5	12.0
1758	1408⅛	Aberforth Smlr‡	1730		2.8	27.0
1394	1178	**Alliance Witan**	1387	+ 1	2.1	75.0
401	321	Artemis UK Future Lead‡	397½	+ 3½	3.9	32.1
220	116⅜	Athelney Trust	165		6.1	14.5
273	235⅛	AVI Global	263	- ½	1.7	51.9
194	154½	AVI Japan	168	- 1	1.3	57.1
331	264	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	310	- 3	0.8	...
133	91⅜	Baillie Gifford Eur Gr	129	- 3½	0.6	...
1086	811⅛	Baillie Gifford Jpn	1074	+ 2	0.9	...
174¾	123	Baillie Gifford SN	172¼	+ 1⅜	0.4	...
231	180⅛	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	227	- 4	2.7	36.4
153⅝	121¾	Bankers Invstmt Tst‡	152¾	+ ⅜	1.8	67.9
445	387¾	BH Macro GBP	425½	- 2	...	20.1
1730	813⅛	Biotech Growth	1724	+ 24	...	-907.4
289½	197	BlckRck Amer Inc	286	- 1	5.2	...
205	118½	BlckRck Eng&Res Inc	182½	- ½	3.2	52.1
208	162½	BlckRck Fro Inv	192	+ ½	4.0	25.6
625	507	BlackRock Grt Euro	616	- 1	1.2	89.4
238	200	BlckRck Inc&Grth‡	234	+ 4	3.3	32.4
288⅜	230¾	BlckRck Smlr‡	281	- ½	2.8	32.1
1072⅞	543⅛	BlckRck Wld Min	988	+ 5	2.4	41.0
1665	1274	Brown Adv US Sm	1620	- 5	...	-270.5
1584	1336	Brunner‡	1564	- 4	1.7	56.1
401½	312	Caledonia Inv	395	- 5	1.9	51.3
599	486	City of Lon IT‡	591	- 2	3.7	27.4
155⅜	86	Crystal Amber Fd	88½		-64.1	...
592	439⅞	CT Priv Eq Ord	498	- 2	5.7	...
373	320	CT UK Cap & Inc	361	+ 1	3.7	29.8
120	92	CT UK HIT B	111		5.4	22.9
126	97	CT UK HIT	121	+ 3	4.9	24.9
480¼	460	Dunedin Ent#	475		...	...
861	737⅝	Edinburgh IT	851	- 4	3.8	32.0
294½	186¾	Edin Wwide	259½	+ 2½	...	-233.8
1332	325⅞	**F&C Inv Trust**	344¼	+ ¼	1.2	76.6
672	546	Fidlty Asian Val	610		3.4	27.1
339	241	Fidelity China Sp	263½	- 2	3.4	28.6
1574	816	FdityEmrgMkt	1460	+ 26	1.4	63.6
444¾	367½	Fidelity European Trust	443		2.2	39.2
477	372	Fidlty Spec Val	474	+ 1	2.2	38.6
915	706¼	Fins Gwth & Inc	809	- 13	2.5	42.8
85⅝	69¾	GCP Infrastructure‡	82		8.5	38.1
370	316	Global Opps Tst	338½	+ 4½	3.0	43.4
106	101⅝	Golden Prospect‡	105		-15.7	...
68⅞	57⅛	Greencoat Renew	67⅛	- ⅛	-16.7	...
118⅞	92¼	Greencoat UK Wind	113⅞	- ⅛	9.4	-13.1
344	250	Hansa Investment Co‡	338		1.3	76.8
332	244	Hansa Inv Co A‡	330	+ 6	1.3	75.0
3480	2710	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	3435	- 15	...	-58.0
214	173¼	Hend High Inc	207	- 1	5.4	18.4
998	769	Hend Smlr	987	+ 3	2.9	37.8
3290¾	2285	Herald Inv Trust	3045	+ 10	...	...
524	318⅝	HgCapital Trust	403	+ 3	1.2	...
141	107¼	HICL Infra	137¾	- ⅜	6.2	10.0
1611⅜	1288¼	ICG Ent Tr	1468	- 20	2.9	-413.5
494¾	379	Impax Env Mkts	443	+ 1	1.2	89.7
519	368⅜	Invesco Asia Dragon Tr	492	+ 1	3.9	50.1
178½	150⅛	Invesco Bond Inc‡	170½	+ ½	7.2	13.0
427	318	Invesco Glbl Eq Inc‡	416	- 1	3.8	83.0
1258	1041	JPM American	1246		0.9	...
652	393½	JPM Asia Gro & Inc‡	582	+ 12	5.3	...
313	252½	JPM China‡	276	+ 1½	4.9	71.0
986	788	JPM Claverhs‡	968	- 6	3.8	28.7
310	181⅝	JPM Emrg EMEA Sec	246	+ 6	0.2	...
181¼	118⅜	JPM Em Mkts‡	164⅝	+ 1⅜	4.6	71.6
666	548	JPMorgan Euro	630		2.5	34.7
221	145	JPM Em Mkts Div Inc	204	+ 1	2.9	35.9
641	529⅝	JPM GG&I	633½	- 2	3.9	76.6
1098	799	JPM India‡	881	- 10	5.0	...
854	660	JPM Japan	852	+ 11	1.0	83.9
463	365	JPM Smllr Co	453½	+ 4½	0.7	...
1290	977⅜	Law Debenture	1266	- 2	2.9	34.0
190	144	Lowland Inv	187½	+ ½	3.6	27.9
138½	138½	Marwyn Val Inv‡	138½		15.3	...
289	234¼	Mercantile IT	285½	- 1	2.9	30.9
687	536	Merchants Trust‡	678	- 2	4.4	22.2
804	682	Mid Wynd	790	- 2	1.1	...
1664	1360	Monks Inv Trust‡	1636	- 8	0.1	...
189	142	Montanaro Eur Sml‡	177½	+ ½	0.9	91.5
1036	854⅝	Murray Income Trust‡	1004	- 4	4.1	26.0
372½	289	Murray Intl‡	369½	+ 1	3.5	26.6
437	345	Pacific Assets Trust	425	+ 4	...	75.9
409	319½	Pantheon Intl	401½	- 1½	...	...
5095	3636	**Pershing Sqr**	3894	- 20	1.4	3.7
557⅛	508	Personal Assets	551	- 3	1.0	91.4
743½	384	**Polar CapTech**	677	+ 13½	...	-806.0
81¾	63¼	Renewables Infra	77¾	+ 1¼	9.7	-14.4
2645	1932	RIT Cap Ptnr	2625	+ 5	1.7	...
990⅝	490	Riverstone	595	+ 11	...	-370.4
738	488¾	Schroder TotRt	703	+ 3	1.6	71.7
892	600	Schrd Asia Pac	838	+ 11	1.6	63.4
378¾	311⅞	Schrod Inc Gwth	373	- 1	3.9	29.7
401	274	Schrod Jap Gwth	393	+ 3	3.1	56.9
782	652	Schrod UKMid	766	- 6	3.0	30.6
17¾	12¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	17¼	+ ¼	...	-71.9
572	480⅛	Scot American	565	- 5	2.9	36.1
1563	1015¾	**Scot Mortgage**	1425½	+ 1	0.3	...
88	75½	Sequoia Eco‡	86⅛	- ⅝	8.0	12.6
253	215⅞	STS Glbl Inc Grwth	229		3.7	35.3
352	196⅝	Temp Emg Mkt	318½	+ 4½	1.6	59.1
429½	334	Temple Bar	423	- 4	3.7	30.7
198⅝	162¾	The Glbl Smaller‡	195¾	+ 1¼	1.6	66.4
9	0⅜	Potentially AI	6¼	- ½	-1.6	...
364½	291	TR Property	311	- 1½	5.2	19.7
188	188	UIL	192½		19.0	...
302	243	Utilico Emerging Mkt‡	283	- 2	3.4	20.9
865	682	Vietnam Ent Inv	730	+ 9	...	4.7
398	306½	Ww Health	390½	+ ½	0.6	...

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by ICE Data Services.

Exchange rates

Australia $	1.91103 (-0.00142)
Canada $	1.8809 (+0.00031)
Denmark Kr	8.75272 (+0.00333)
Euro	1.1705 (+0.0005)
Hong Kong $	10.596 (nc)
Hungary	426.02 (-1.25)
Indonesia	24130.65 (+76.52)
Israel	4.0265 (-0.0351)
Japan Yen	215.126 (+0.009)
New Zealand $	2.30399 (+0.0089)
Norway Kr	12.80265 (-0.01945)
Poland	5.04 (+0.0155)
Russia	111.708 (+0.139)
S Africa	21.80516 (-0.07374)
Sweden Kr	12.9108 (+0.05315)
Switzerland Fr	1.09688 (+0.00205)
Turkey Lira	64.4943 (+0.0335)
USA $	1.3506 (-0.0001)

Gold/precious metals

(US dollars per ounce)

Bullion: Open $4370.783

Close $4419.73 **High** $4441.394

Low $4362.7

AM $4413.20 **PM** $4426.65

Platinum $1771.5

Silver $65.689

Palladium $1374.342

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks: 3.75%
ECB Refi 2.40%
Fed Fund 3.5-3.75%
Halifax Mortgage Rate (SVR) 7.24%

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.7527	8.7490	-146.86	-422.4
Euro	1.1705	1.1699	-15.08	-43.15
Montreal	1.8809	1.8806	-25.57	-79.24
New York	1.3506	1.3507	-0.65	-1.06
Oslo	12.8027	12.8272	40.76	146.32
Tokyo	215.1260	215.1090	-53.37	-158.82
Zurich	1.0969	1.0950	-37.12	-113.49

Other sterling

Argentine peso	2017.48975-2017.49182
Australian dollar	1.91103-1.91124
Bahrain dinar	0.50830-0.51030
Brazilian real	6.97480-6.97680
Euro	1.17050-1.17130
Hong Kong dollar	10.59600-10.60000
Indian rupee	128.82130-128.90131
Indonesian rupiah	24130.65039-24170.65039
Kuwaiti dinar	0.41660-0.41860
Malaysian ringgit	5.51690-5.51890
New Zealand dollar	2.30399-2.30446
Singaporean dollar	1.72806-1.72903
South African rand	21.80516-21.81750
UAE dirham	4.96010-4.96210

Dollar rates

Australia	1.41460-1.41540
Canada	1.39272-1.39277
Denmark	6.48126-6.48142
Euro	0.86680-0.86720
Hong Kong	7.84740-7.84751
Japan	159.28400-159.28999
Malaysia	4.08300-4.08800
Norway	9.47898-9.48257
Singapore	1.27980-1.27987
Sweden	9.55998-9.56253
Switzerland	0.81221-0.81226

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3. **Printed user guide** – An easy-to-follow user guide helps you learn at your pace and refer back whenever needed.
4. **Call centre support** – Friendly, UK-based support is available whenever needed.
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One-eyed matriarch of a Melbourne crime family
Kath Pettingill
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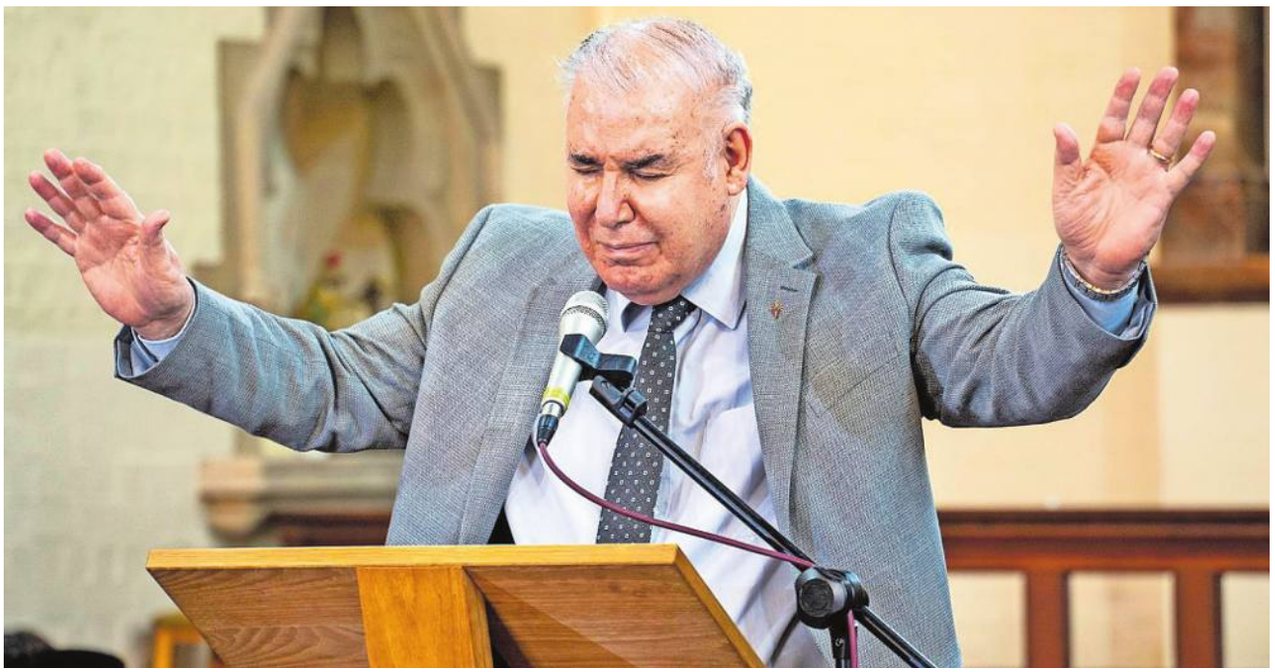
Obituaries

The Rev Edward Hovsepian-Mehr

Charismatic Iranian Protestant pastor who was persecuted for his faith in his home country and built up an underground church



Hovsepian-Mehr had a booming baritone voice and was heartbroken that at the underground house churches in Iran the praise and worship had to be low volume

Ignoring an ultimatum to stop converting Iranian Muslims to Christianity, Edward Hovsepian-Mehr continued to preside over one of the fastest-growing churches in the world.

Memories of identifying the bloodied body of his elder brother, Haik, a bishop who was found murdered in 1994 after refusing to comply with a list of restrictions demanded by the Iranian state, did not deter "Brother Edward", as he was known.

The brothers, of Armenian heritage, had spent decades building up the Iranian branch of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God, but by the mid-1990s it was clear that public worship of non-state sanctioned Christianity in Iran was no longer viable and the church would have to go underground.

From the mid-1990s until he was forced into exile in London in 2003, Hovsepian-Mehr helped to set up house churches throughout Iran, at which small groups would meet to study the Bible, pray and sing hymns. Meetings would keep changing from house to house to lessen the chance of being raided, and worshippers would stagger their entry over a few hours so as not to attract suspicion. Most heartbreaking of all for Hovsepian-Mehr, who would belt out hymns with a fine baritone voice, was that the praise and worship had to be low volume.

As he orchestrated the secret gatherings, he was subjected to relentless harassment, intimidation, threats and repeated interrogations. Operating from London from 2003 he continued to organise pastoral support for Christian converts in Iran.

Edward Hovsepian-Mehr was born in Tehran in 1950 into a poor family of Armenian heritage. His father, Nazaar Hovsepian, a cook, and mother, Tamar Khachiki, divorced when he was little. He and his brother were brought up by their mother, who was nominally Christian. The early years were tinged by sadness, but Hovsepian-Mehr's life changed at the age of 13 when he was invited to hear Pastor Leon Hairapetian preach. When the pastor asked, "Who among you would like to give his life to Jesus tonight?", Hovsepian-Mehr found himself standing up. He preached his first sermon aged 16 and after completing his theological studies was ordained as a pastor at the age of 17. Aged 20 he was appointed pastor of the Assemblies of God church in Isfahan and later moved to the city of Urmia in the north-west of the country, where he planted a new church and trained new leaders.

Persecution of Christians started almost immediately after the Iranian revolution when the Anglican pastor Arastoo Sayyah was murdered at his church office in Shiraz on February 19, 1979. Over the next few years the hardline theocratic regime would make it clear that it would tolerate only ancient Christian communities, such as the 200,000-strong Armenian Apostolic Church and the Assyrian Church of the East, provided they conducted services in their own language and did not evangelise to Muslims.

In 1986 Hovsepian-Mehr was appointed senior pastor of the Assembly of God church in Tehran, the largest Protestant church in Iran, working closely with his brother, Haik. Both refused to bow to tighter regulation on the church and persecution intensified in the early 1990s. Iran's Bible Society was closed down and Farsi translations of the Bible banned. Conducting church services in Farsi was outlawed and it was decreed that all church members must give their names and addresses to the authorities and people could go to church only if they were issued with an official identity card.

He was subjected to relentless threats and repeated interrogations

After the murder of Haik in 1994, Hovsepian-Mehr succeeded him as superintendent of the Assemblies of God churches in Iran, although he had to assume the role unofficially as the authorities would not recognise him. Thereafter it was difficult to travel around the country because of the threat of abduction.

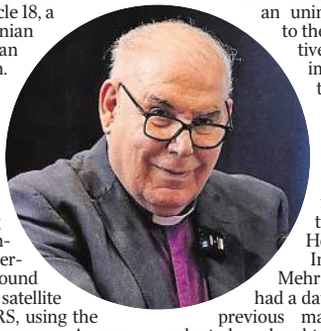
At least eight Christian leaders in Iran have died for their faith since the revolution. In 1996 Mohammad Bagher Yusefi, known as Pastor Ravanbakhsh (which means soul giver in Farsi), was found hanged. Eight years before, he had converted from Islam to Christianity and ran the Assemblies of God church in Gorgan, northern Iran. His murder by state operatives convinced Hovsepian-Mehr to accelerate the house church movement, training and mentoring house church leaders.

After moving to London in 2003, Hovsepian-Mehr ran three churches, including founding a church in Finchley, the North London Iranian Church, that would become the largest Iranian church of the global diaspora.

In 2008 Iran attempted to enshrine the death penalty for "apostasy" into civil law — in line with sharia — but the state withdrew the proposal under international diplomatic pressure. Anyone found to have converted from Islam to Christianity could still be imprisoned for five to 15 years and banned from applying for jobs.

Hovsepian-Mehr mustered the support of 99 Iranian churches around the world to unite against proposed amendments to Iran's Islamic Penal Code. He was also the principal founder of the Hamgam Council of United Iranian Churches, a partnership of Farsi-speaking churches across Europe and Canada that connected more than 20 churches in many denominations.

"There was a lot of distrust before," said Mansour Borji, the executive director of Article 18, a London-based Iranian Christian human rights organisation. "He broke through those barriers through making people sit together and eat together."



A hulking figure with a booming voice and beetling brows, Hovsepian-Mehr preached sermons to Iranians around the world on the satellite channel SAT-7 PARS, using the lyricism of the Farsi language. Any newcomers to his churches would sometimes be taken aback by his demand to visit their houses, without waiting to be invited. "People would think that there is something wrong, but it was just his desire to get to know them and their families," Borji said. "Word got around that he loved ice cream."

Yet supporting house churches in Iran remained a priority and he kept in touch with more than 200 house church leaders, running Bible study groups with them and providing training. He intensified his efforts after the Islamic Revolutionary Courts closed down the Assemblies of God church in 2013. The three remaining Anglican churches in Iran, St Luke in Isfahan, Simon the Zealot in Shiraz and St Paul's in Tehran, have been closed since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Article 18 said it was in possession of judgments issued by the Revolutionary Courts that criminalised Christians "simply for maintaining contact with Pastor Edward or participating in pastoral ministry connected to him and the house church movement". It added: "These court verdicts stand as an unintended testimony to the remarkable effectiveness and enduring impact of his ministry."

Hovsepian-Mehr's first wife, Anahid, died of cancer in 2001. He is survived by their four children, Rozita, Anita, Tali and Hovan.

In 2003 Hovsepian-Mehr married Nassi. She had a daughter, Ava, from a previous marriage and they adopted a daughter, Lydia. Coming from a musical family, Hovsepian-Mehr loved to sing and play the piano, translating a number of well-known hymns into Farsi. All his children played an instrument and family occasions never failed to break into song.

The only other thing that rivalled his passion for ministry was football, but when it came to the recent World Cup he supported Brazil. It broke his heart not to support Iran, whose national team was, he said, an instrument of propaganda. Over 6ft tall, he loved to play alongside young adults in the church community. "You didn't want to be on the team against him," Borji said.

Hovsepian-Mehr was intending to retire at the end of this year. Walking with the aid of a Zimmer frame and working on completing his fourth book, he was present at the Palace of Westminster when Article 18's latest report was presented this year. Article 18 claims that, after mass protests against the Iranian regime and the 12-day war with Israel in June 2025, Christians were "scapegoated".

Nearly twice as many Christians were arrested on charges related to their religious beliefs or activities in 2025 than in the previous year — 254 compared with 139. More than twice as many served sentences of imprisonment, exile or forced labour and at least 11 Christians received prison sentences of ten years or more in 2025.

However, despite continued aggressive crackdowns, the underground church in Iran continues to grow. It is estimated to have 800,000 adherents. "Levels of oppression have become so much people feel there is nothing to lose," Borji said. The example of Hovsepian-Mehr inspired many of them.

"It was because of his humility that he could take on any challenge because he knew it was God who started the work," Charles Gogbashian, pastor of the Armenian church in Chiswick, west London, said. "He knew that whatever God had started he would finish."

The Rev Edward Hovsepian-Mehr, Iranian pastor, was born on May 9, 1950. He died of a heart attack on June 26, 2026, aged 76

Register

Kath Pettingill

One-eyed matriarch of Melbourne's most notorious underworld dynasty who presided over a drug and prostitution empire

A diminutive, one-eyed grandmother known as Granny Evil, Kath Pettingill was the matriarch of Melbourne's most notorious crime family. She oversaw an empire built on drugs, armed robberies and prostitution that reached its heyday in the 1980s, often protected by corrupt police officers.

Pettingill bore the scars of a lifetime on the wrong side of the tracks. Her front teeth were smashed after leaping over a wall to retrieve a ball, but remained untreated. Her right eye was shot out in 1978 during an argument with a prostitute over a $300 debt. That brought the benefit, she joked, of not seeing double after excess drinking. The police joined the humour, naming a surveillance exercise against her family Operation Cyclops.

Several of her ten children followed in her criminal footsteps. On a visit to her son Dennis's home, she found a young man lying naked with a meat cleaver in his head. Spotting his discarded clothing she called out to Dennis, "Don't burn the tracksuit. I'll wash it out and give it to Jamie [Dennis's half-brother]," before scrubbing the blood from the walls.

'Not even Ned Kelly inspired the same hatred among the police force'

As a young, cash-strapped mother, Pettingill accepted a friend's offer of work at a massage parlour. "Later I had sex with some of the clients for money. It didn't worry me, not for $1,500 a week," she reflected. When the owner's car was blown up she took over the business, acquiring a better reputation than the city's other parlour managers. "She was straight down the line and she looked after you if there was trouble," said "the Talking Bone", one of her workers.

A Turkish couple once turned up with their teenage son, the mother crying, for what Pettingill presumed was a rite of passage. Another time she arrived to find a man wearing a bib and being fed baby food. When an elderly client dropped dead, the police, back then still on her payroll, helped to dress him and drag his body to a nearby street, where his family was told he had been found. "Bet he died with a smile on his face," she quipped. One sex worker came out of her room, her face ashen white. "He wants me to cut his balls off," she said. "I don't mind doing it, but I don't want to do the ten years for manslaughter."

For many years Pettingill and her family seemed immune to the reach of Victoria police. That changed when two of her sons were implicated in the Walsh Street murders of October 1988 in which two police officers were shot dead. "I hate coppers, but those boys didn't do anything," she insisted. "Our family wouldn't do that. We were not involved. You don't kill two innocent coppers."

Although her sons and two other men were acquitted, the relationship between the Pettingills and the police never recovered. As Adrian Tame wrote in *The Matriarch* (1996), his biography of her: "Not even Ned Kelly and his gang inspired the same hatred among the state's police force as Kathy's boys."

Kathleen Kemp was born in the Brunswick East suburb of Melbourne in 1935, the eldest of three daughters of Albert Kemp, a timber worker, and his teenage wife, Gladys (née Lee), who ran a sweet shop from where young Kath stole coins. Her sisters were Barbara, who died from polio, and Wilma, who avoided a life of crime. Aged six, Kath wandered into a room where a newly deceased relative had been laid out in his coffin. Reaching into his mouth she twisted out his dentures and tried them on for size.

Albert enlisted at the outbreak of the Second World War and took his own life in the Middle East. Thereafter Gladys neglected her children to embark on up to six bigamous marriages, "largely for their pensions". Their surviving daughters were cared for by their great-grandmother, also Kathleen.

DARREN LUNNY; FAIRFAX MEDIA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Pettingill at an exhibition of photographs of underworld figures, including of her

Pettingill attended Princes Hill High School, leaving at 15 to work in a clothing factory. she soon met Dennis Ryan, 19, who arrived on a gleaming Triumph motorcycle. To avoid charges of carnal knowledge, he married her when she turned 16. By then she had given birth to their first child, also Dennis, who became a multiple murderer, basking in the underworld nickname Dr Death. He died from a heart condition in 1987 while awaiting trial. His mother was furious that he used her new vacuum cleaner to remove the splattered brains of one of his victims from the carpet. "I would have shot him myself if I'd been given the chance," she fumed. Their second child, Peter, once branded Victoria's most dangerous criminal, served 28 years in jail for armed robbery.

While Ryan was fighting in the Korean War, Pettingill began a relationship with Billy Pierce, a small-time criminal. "He was good looking and he loved a drink and a fight," she said. They had six children: Vicki, who went into hiding after giving evidence against the family in the Walsh Street trial; Victor, who was acquitted in that case and was shot dead in 2002; and Lex, a minor criminal. Three others were placed for adoption.

Pierce died in 1968. By then she had two more sons with Jimmy Pettingill, a mysterious figure who already had a wife and a lover: Jamie died of a heroin overdose aged 21; Trevor was also acquitted in the Walsh Street case but still acquired a long criminal record. She broke up with Pettingill in 1967 but continued using his name. By then she was a barmaid at the Sentimental Bloke Hotel in Bulleen, offering free drinks to off-duty policemen. When she realised this would not bring leniency for her boys, she became, in the words of one officer, "an absolute police hater".

Despite her long connection with the underworld, Pettingill was 41 before her first conviction, for using premises for prostitution. More followed: assault, living off immoral earnings, driving without a licence and possession of firearms and heroin. "Yeah, I probably hit the cops, but they throw that in anyway," she said. She enjoyed the relative tranquillity of jail, haranguing the governor, dishing out black eyes to bullies and going on hunger strike in support of a prisoner in solitary confinement.

Her life attracted the interest of filmmakers, but she was unimpressed with *Animal Kingdom* (2010), especially Jacki Weaver's Oscar-nominated performance as Smurf, the film's matriarch. "Jacki Weaver and I have only one thing in common," she snorted. "Neither of us can act."

By the late 1980s, Pettingill had retired to a sleepy seaside hideaway in Venus Bay, a two-hour drive southeast of Melbourne. She returned to the city in 1993 to care for three grandchildren when their parents were jailed. Unable to resist her criminal ways, she received another 18-month jail sentence for drug dealing. She had no doubts about her final destiny. "Nothing I can do now will change that," she said in 1996. "Anyway, that's where my dead children are, down there in Hell. I want to be with them. I don't mind. Heaven sounds boring, not my sort of place."

Kath Pettingill, criminal matriarch, was born on March 27, 1935. She died on August 1, 2026, aged 91

Plas Johnson

Virtuoso session saxophonist who played with Frank Sinatra and whose unforgettable solo defined the Pink Panther theme

To Plas Johnson it was just another session, one of thousands he played over a long career in which his services were in demand with everyone from Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald to BB King and the Beach Boys.

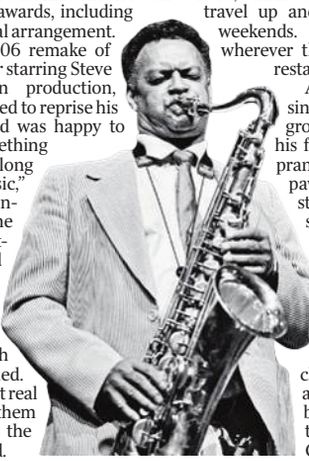
Summoned by the composer and orchestra leader Henry Mancini to play the tenor saxophone on a film theme, he turned up for the session at 8am on a winter's morning and nailed his part instantly, as he invariably did. He was getting ready to pack up his instrument and move on to his next session when something extraordinary happened. "We only did two takes but when we finished, everyone applauded — even the string players," he recalled. "They never applaud so when they do, you know you've really done something."

With the mischievous, playful swing of Johnson's sax to the fore, what they had just recorded was the theme for *The Pink Panther,* the 1963 movie starring Peter Sellers as the splendidly bumbling Inspector Clouseau.

Nobody could have known that it would become one of the most memorable theme tunes in movie history. "But I did feel that it was something special," Johnson recalled. "It was a great arrangement, with a huge orchestra, a jazz band, strings and French horns. It just came off."

As Mancini knew that it would. "All the accents in the music were timed to actions on the screen," the composer wrote in his 1989 autobiography. "I had a specific saxophone player in mind — Plas Johnson. I nearly always precast my players and write for them and around them, and Plas had the sound and the style I wanted." Released as a single, the theme became a hit and won three Grammy awards, including best instrumental arrangement.

When the 2006 remake of *The Pink Panther* starring Steve Martin was in production, Johnson was asked to reprise his original solo and was happy to oblige. "Something that lasts that long has to be a classic," he said. He continued to play the theme at night-club gigs and gave his final performance at his community retirement home a month before he died. "People's eyes get real big when I tell them that was me on the original," he said.



Plas John Johnson was born in 1931 in Donaldsonville, Louisiana, 60 miles west of New Orleans on the banks of the Mississippi River. His mother, Grace, played piano and sang, and his father, Plas Johnson Snr, whose name derived from "*plaisant*", French for pleasant or amusing, was a saxophonist. "They hustled work everywhere we lived," their son recalled. "We would travel up and down the bayou on weekends. They would play wherever they could, in bars and restaurants, dances."

At a young age he was singing with the family group but when he was 12 his father bought him a soprano saxophone from a pawn shop. "My dad got me started but I was mostly self-taught, playing by ear," he said. He later added alto, tenor and baritone saxophones plus clarinet and flute to his repertoire and by his mid-teens was performing in the clubs of New Orleans alongside his older brother Ray on piano as the Johnson Brothers Combo, sometimes with their younger sister Gwen on vocals.

They also backed visiting R&B singers and when the blues singer Charles Brown came to town in 1951 he invited Johnson to join his band. The next few years were spent "on the road in clubs, learning 5,000 tunes, playing behind strip-teasers and for dancers" until he was drafted into the US army.

While stationed in California he played in a military band and on his discharge he moved to Los Angeles, where he was hired as a session man for Capitol Records, whose roster included Sinatra, Peggy Lee and Nat King Cole.

Johnson went on to work with all of them as well as recording his own albums as a bandleader, and his versatility meant that work was plentiful. An average day could include up to three or four sessions and he might start by sitting in with an orchestra for a movie soundtrack, follow by backing Sinatra or Lee and end by blowing some raucous rock'n'roll with Duane Eddy or Gene Vincent. He first worked with Mancini in 1958 on the theme for the TV detective drama *Peter Gunn* and the soundtrack album they recorded together won the first Grammy award for album of the year.

He is survived by Carol, his wife of 60 years, and their three children, Eric Johnson, Stephanie Oliver and Philip Nunn, and by three further children, Cheryl Johnson, David Johnson and Denise Hurley, from his first marriage to Elizabeth Johnson, which ended in divorce.

Throughout the 1960s he was a member of the "Wrecking Crew", a group of A-list Los Angeles session musicians known for their ability to adapt to any style and work quickly without rehearsing. There were theme songs for TV shows, and rock and pop sessions ranging from Bobby Darin to the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*, while at night he played at jazz clubs with his own group.

In 1970 Johnson became part of the house band on the long-running syndicated TV show hosted by Merv Griffin. He stayed for 15 years but continued as a prolific sessioner, his resonant sax playing gracing hit albums by Steely Dan, Marvin Gaye, Elton John, Linda Ronstadt, Tom Waits and Rod Stewart.

It was his proud boast that he brought something fresh to every booking. "You have to key into the style of the music, and the singer and the arrangement," he said. "Your notes are your words and it's very boring if you use the same adjectives over and over again."

Plas Johnson, saxophonist, was born on July 21, 1931. He died of old age on July 15, 2026, aged 94

Law Report

Dip pots in meal deal are zero-rated for VAT

Upper Tribunal
Published August 13, 2026

Queenscourt Ltd v Revenue and Customs Commissioners

Before Mrs Justice Joanna Smith and Upper Tribunal Judge Mark Baldwin
[2026] UKUT 195 (TCC)
Judgment May 19, 2026

Every supply, including every element in a multi-element transaction which would be treated as a supply if provided on its own, must be regarded as distinct and independent for value added tax (VAT) purposes, unless it fell within one of the few exceptional cases where a derogation from that fundamental principle was permitted.

In the present case, the overall supply of a "meal deal" was a multiple supply, not a single composite supply of food, and dip pots included in the deal were separate zero-rated supplies for VAT purposes.

The Upper Tribunal (Tax and Chancery Chamber) so held when allowing the appeal of the taxpayer, Queenscourt Ltd, against an assessment for VAT upheld by the First-tier Tribunal (FTT) in respect of supplies of condiment dip pots as part of its hot takeaway meal deals from KFC outlets in the UK.

Charlotte Brown for the taxpayer; **Dilpreet Dhanoa** for the revenue.

The UPPER TRIBUNAL said that in deciding the matter the First-tier Tribunal had concluded that the supply of dip pots as part of a takeaway meal deal was part of a single, standard rated supply of the hot food and dips.

Having noted that the sale of a portion of takeaway chicken by one of the taxpayer-operated fast-food outlets, being hot food, was standard rated for VAT purposes, while the sale of a dip pot, being cold food, was zero rated, the FTT identified the issue it needed to resolve as being whether this remained the case when the two items were purchased together, along with other items, as part of a takeaway meal deal.

The FTT noted that under European case law, while the starting point was that every supply should normally be seen as distinct and independent, there were circumstances where the supply of more than one item in a single transaction might be treated as a single supply which took its VAT treatment from whichever part of the supply predominated.

The FTT concluded that it was possible for some elements of a single transaction to be principal or ancillary supplies, and therefore to constitute a single supply, while there were other elements of the same transaction which, based on the starting point that all elements of a supply were separate, did not form part of that single supply as they were distinct and independent.

Given the starting point that each element of the supply was separate, it must follow that it was necessary to look separately at each element of the supply in order to determine, applying the principles developed by authority, whether that element stood alone or whether it should be treated as part of a single supply along with one or more, but not necessarily all, other elements of the transaction.

Although it acknowledged that the authorities it had been referred to envisaged that either all elements of the transaction would constitute distinct principal supplies or would alternatively be treated as one single supply, the FTT observed that there was no suggestion in any of those cases that the court was being asked to consider the possibility that two or more elements of a transaction might together form a single supply while other elements are treated as separate supplies. The FTT went on to consider that, having regard to the diversity of commercial operations, it was not possible to give exhaustive guidance on how to approach the problem correctly in all cases.

The FTT had concluded that there was no reason in principle why two or more elements of a single transaction could not constitute a single supply while, at the same time, other elements of the same transaction constituted a separate supply. Having done so, the FTT determined that the supply of dip pots was ancillary to the hot food with which they were supplied and accordingly standard rated for VAT.

The taxpayer raised a number of grounds of appeal, including that the FTT had made a fundamental error of principle when it held that there was no reason in principle why two or more elements of a single transaction could not constitute a single supply while, at the same time, other elements of the same transaction might constitute a separate supply.

The taxpayer contended that the authorities treated supplies containing multiple elements as either a single or a multiple supply and that where a transaction was a multiple supply each component element must be taxed at its own rate except where legislation specifically provided otherwise. The taxpayer further contended that the revenue had already accepted that the meal deal was a multiple supply and, accordingly, each component part must therefore be taxed at its own rate.

The Upper Tribunal determined that the principles derived from the authorities were to be applied at transaction level to decide whether the transaction should be regarded as a single composite supply, as opposed to specific elements of the transaction. For the transaction to be regarded as a single composite supply, this must absorb all the elements in the transaction. There was no suggestion that this principle operated below the level of the whole transaction.

The observation that a supply of one element on its own could be very different from a supply of the same element in combination with other elements was an important one. If the VAT analysis of a particular element could change depending on whether it was supplied on its own or in combination with other elements, it must follow that it would be artificial and potentially distortive to analyse an element otherwise than on the actual basis on which it was supplied.

The Upper Tribunal concluded that every supply, including every element in a multi-element transaction which would be a supply if provided on its own, must be regarded as distinct and independent unless it fell within one of the few exceptional cases where a derogation from that fundamental principle was permitted. Leaving aside legislative overrides, these exceptions required all the elements in a single transaction to constitute a single economic supply.

Accordingly, the FTT had made an error of law when it concluded that there was no reason in principle why two or more elements of a single transaction could not constitute a single supply while, at the same time, other elements of the same transaction may constitute a separate supply.

It was common ground that the overall supply of a meal deal was a multiple supply, not a single composite supply. Against that background, had the FTT correctly concluded that each element of a multiple supply must be analysed separately for VAT purposes, it could only have concluded that dip pots supplied as part of a takeaway meal deal were separate zero-rated supplies.

In this case the FTT's error was a material one; if it had not made it, the FTT would inevitably have reached the opposite conclusion. Accordingly, the Upper Tribunal remade the FTT's decision to reflect the outcome it would inevitably have reached had it not made that error of law.

Solicitors: **PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP**; **Solicitor, Revenue and Customs Commissioners**.

Lives remembered

Sir Anthony Kenny

Sir Simon Jenkins writes: Towards the end of their lives, Tony Kenny (obituary, August 7) would frequently join the late Bishop Richard Harries, myself and others in sturdy walks through the Chilterns. The privilege of those walks was unforgettable. Nothing was off the agenda. To Harries (obituary, April 30), steeped in his Welsh background, our references to the beauty of the landscape were a constant evidence of God's presence. To Kenny this evidence, like religion itself, was a metaphor for the inexplicable. It was uplifting and exhausting. But Tony's preference for agnosticism over atheism left me puzzled — and Harries slightly on top.

Robert Waller writes: I thank you for your full and perceptive obituary of Sir Anthony Kenny, one of a series of fine masters of my undergraduate college. However, relating to the aside regarding Boris Johnson, I must point out that the Bullingdon Club, far from an aspect of "college life", had nothing whatsoever to do with Balliol — and was indeed pretty much as unrepresentative of the college's ethos as can be imagined.

Chris Chivers writes: Further to your excellent obituary, one of the lesser known of Sir Anthony Kenny's many telling interventions was the South African Advanced Education Project, which he founded with David Astor, the former editor of The Observer.

From 1985 to 1995, this enabled members of the African National Congress in exile to receive training opportunities — mentorships, work placements with local authorities or leading companies — so that they would be prepared to enter senior governance positions when democracy dawned.

About 700 individuals benefited from bespoke opportunities lasting between three months and two years. I know that President Mandela thought this to be a vital contribution to the first generation of leaders, and valued immensely the contribution that Sir Anthony had made.

Lord Laming

Kevin Mansell writes: Herbert (obituary, July 31), born in Newcastle, was a passionate Newcastle United fan. When I was a humble inspector working under him in the Social Services Inspectorate, I offered to get him a ticket on two occasions when Newcastle were playing at West Ham and he readily accepted. So he joined myself and my 14-year-old son in the Chicken Run. Newcastle won the first 4-2 in fine style, but not enough to win the Premier League. In the second, West Ham won 2-0, helping them to avoid relegation. He was a proper fan. No airs and graces.

▶ If you would like to add a personal view or recollection to a published obituary, you can send your contribution by email to **tributes@thetimes.co.uk**

Births, Marriages and Deaths

To book a Birth, Marriage or Death announcement in the Register, visit: **newsukadvertising.co.uk** for help, please call 020 7782 7553 or email BMDs@thetimes.co.uk

PEACE I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14.27 (AV)

Bible verses are provided by the Bible Society

Births

GUBBINS on 6th August 2026 to Charlotte (née Fraser) and Nicholas, a daughter, Ophelia Rose Haigh, sister to Ottilie, at the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital.

Deaths

BARRY Catriona (née MacKenzie) died peacefully on 9th August 2026, aged 79, at home surrounded by family in Broad Hinton, Wiltshire. Much-loved wife, mother and grandmother.

DIXON Alyson Elizabeth (née Plummer) died peacefully, surrounded by her family, on 31st July 2026, aged 79. Beloved wife of the late Peter-John, much-loved mother and grandmother. Funeral service at Isel Church on Monday 17th August at 2pm, followed by a gathering at Setmurthy Village Hall. Family flowers only. Donations in aid of the MS Society. Inquiries to F&W Green Funeral Directors, 19 Eskin Street, Keswick, CA12 4DQ. Tel: 017687 72246.

FITZHUGH Marlene Bernabet, died on 29th July 2026, aged 76. Much-loved wife of Dirk, mother of Richard, James and Christian, grandmother of Olivia, Joel, Arturo and most recently Renny. Memorial service at St Bartholomew's Church, Tong, Shifnal, Salop, TF11 8PW, at 11am on Friday 21st August 2026. Donations for Compton Care, Wolverhampton, c/o RA Brooks & Son Funeral Directors via www.brooksfunerals.co.uk.

FORBES Carole (née Whitehead), peacefully on 5th August 2026. Beloved wife of Dennis Harding, mother of Jojo and the late Neil, grandmother of Jack, Luke, Geordie and Isolda. Funeral at East Lothian Crematorium, Newcraighall, Edinburgh, on Friday 28th August at 2.30pm. Family flowers only please.

FYFE Peter Matthew died peacefully on 30th June 2026 after a short illness. Loving husband to Caroline, proud father to Alexa, Nick and Toby and a devoted grandfather.

HARRIS David died peacefully on 1st August 2026, aged 85. Much-loved father of Simon, Robert and Toby, husband of Liz, and grandfather of six. Funeral service at St Mary's Church, Kintbury, West Berkshire, at 2.45pm on Wednesday 26th August 2026. No flowers please, donations if desired to Diabetes UK.

HILL David passed away on 28th July 2026, aged 87. Beloved husband of Anna, and father to Caroline and Oliver. David was an entrepreneur, a shrewd businessman, formidable negotiator, loyal friend and trusted confidant. He will be much missed by many. A private funeral will be followed by a celebration of life. Please email hillcaroline@me.com for details.

JUKES Matthew Shaw died suddenly on 6th August 2026 while on holiday in Portugal, aged 58. Adored husband of Amelia and dearly loved father of Isadora, Elspeth, Rollo and Victor. Cherished elder son of Michael and Patricia and brother of Simon. Private funeral followed by a memorial service, date to be announced.

MCEWAN Dr Anthea (née Deacon) passed away peacefully on 4th July 2026, aged 92. Wife to Dr Thomas McEwan (deceased), mother to Tom, Robert and Gregor.

SANDFORD Janet Mary (née Farfan de los Godos) died peacefully at home on 2nd August 2026, aged 91. Wife of the late Alexander George Sandford.

WOOD Don, on 17th July 2026, aged 101. A gentleman in every respect from a different era, a Bing Crosby style crooner in 1940s/50s clubs, a craftsman to whatever he put his hand to. Thoughtful, kind, loving. Will be dearly missed by the whole family.

There is no Court Circular for Wednesday, August 12

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Legal Notices

Notice of Intended Distribution to Creditors
EUROPEAN OPPORTUNITIES TRUST PLC
(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation) ("the Company")
Company Registered Number: 04056870
Registered office address: Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF
Principal trading address: 123 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6DE

As Joint Liquidators of the Company, we hereby give notice that we intend to make a final distribution to its creditors. The last date for proving is 18 September 2026 and creditors of the Company should by that date send their full names and addresses and particulars of their debts or claims to me, Derek Neil Hyslop of Ernst & Young LLP, Atria One, 144 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EX.

In accordance with Rule 14.38(1)(c) of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016, we may thereafter make the proposed distribution without regard to the claim of any person in respect of a debt not yet proved.

Joint Liquidators: Derek Neil Hyslop (IP number 9970) of Ernst & Young LLP, Atria One, 144 Morrison Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EX and Richard Barker (IP number 17150) of Ernst & Young LLP, 1 More London Place, London, SE1 2AF. Date of appointment: 7 August 2026. For further information contact: Harry Bulmer +44 13 1460 2388.

Dated: 11 August 2026
Derek Neil Hyslop, *Joint Liquidator*

Cayman Islands Companies Act (2026 Revision)
NOTICE OF MEETING OF CREDITORS
CENTAUR LITIGATION LIMITED
(registration number 259909)
CENTAUR LITIGATION SPC
(registration number 265075)
CENTAUR LITIGATION UNIT SERIES I LIMITED (registration number 254015)
(All in Official Liquidation)
(Collectively "the Companies")

TAKE NOTICE that pursuant to *Order 8 rule 2 of the Companies Winding up Rules (2023 Consolidation)* concurrent meetings of creditors of the Companies, whose registered offices are situated at HSM Corporate Services Ltd, 68 Fort Street, George Town, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands will be **held on Thursday, 3 September 2026 at 3:00pm AEST** notionally at the offices of Grant Thornton Australia Limited, Grosvenor Place, Level 26, 225 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000. **Attendance will be available by webinar only**. Those creditors wishing to attend by webinar should contact the Joint Official Liquidators (JOLs) at the contact details noted below, at least three business days prior to the date of the meeting to obtain registration details for the webinar and/or to notify them of their intention to attend the meeting.

In order for a creditor to attend the above meeting, they are required to provide the JOLs with a proof of debt, if they have not already done so.

Corporate creditors entitled to attend the meeting in person or by webinar **must** appoint a proxy by completing and returning to the JOLs a proxy form, which you may also obtain by contacting the JOLs on the contact details below.

Both forms (if required) must be submitted to the JOLs **prior to 3:00pm AEST Monday, 31 August 2026**.

Dated this 14 August 2026
Said Jahani, Joint Official Liquidator
Contact for Enquiries:
Email: centaur.enquiries@au.gt.com
Address for Service:
Grant Thornton Australia Limited, Grosvenor Place, Level 26, 225 George Street, Sydney, NSW 2000

Notice under the Trustee Act 1925
Alcohols Limited Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 27 (1) of the Trustee Act 1925 that the Trustees of the Alcohols Limited Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme, formerly known as the WH Palmer & Company (Industries) Ltd Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme ("the Trustees", "the Scheme") are winding up the Scheme. If you have received communication from the Trustees regarding the wind up of the Scheme, then you do not need to take any action. This notice concerns members of the Alcohols Limited Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme only. If you have additional benefits in other current scheme(s) for Alcohols Ltd employees, these are unaffected. The wind-up of the Scheme commenced on 31 May 2022. Anyone who believes that they are a member of the Scheme, and has not otherwise received notification of wind up of the Scheme, is required to provide details to the Trustees by emailing bob.ling@alcohols.co.uk, or in writing to this address: Robert Ling, 3rd Floor Endeavour House, Coopers End Rd, Stansted CM24 1SJ Anyone who believes they have any other interest, claim or entitlement in relation to the Scheme but have not received announcements from the Trustees, should contact the Trustees in the same way. Claimants should provide their full name, address, date of birth, National Insurance number, the period during which they worked for Alcohols Limited or any associated company and any documents supporting their claim. Claims must be made within 2 months of the date of publication of this notice. In addition, if any person or persons have any other claims against or interest in the Scheme, they are requested to set out particulars of such a claim in writing within 2 months of the date of publication of this notice. Once two months have elapsed following the publication date of this notice, the Trustees may distribute the assets of the Scheme amongst the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have prior notice and will not, as regards the assets so distributed, be liable to any person of whose claim they do not have notice. Please only get in touch if you are no longer a member of one of the schemes in the list above, and you think that you might have transferred to the Scheme.

Dated 13 August 2026
Robert Ling
On behalf of the Trustees of the Alcohols Limited Retirement and Death Benefit Scheme

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NOVEMBER 2026

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Sat 14 **Road Town, Tortola**

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Weather

Today Cloudy with spells of rain in the north and west, dry and very hot elsewhere. Max 37C (99F), min 13C (55F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	24	R	0.0	0.8
Aberporth	27	S	0.0	12.6
Anglesey	25	S	0.0	12.0
Aviemore	25	S	0.0	3.9
Barnstaple	33	PC	0.0	**
Bedford	29	S	0.0	**
Belfast	24	PC	0.0	7.9
Birmingham	31	S	0.0	**
Bournemouth	30	S	0.0	13.8
Bridlington	23	S	0.0	**
Bristol	31	S	0.0	13.0
Camborne	27	S	0.0	13.6
Cardiff	29	S	0.0	10.8
Edinburgh	26	M	0.0	9.2
Eskdalemuir	22	R	0.0	9.0
Glasgow	22	C	0.0	9.9
Hereford	29	S	0.0	**
Herstmonceux	28	S	0.0	11.2
Ipswich	27	S	0.0	13.2
Isle of Man	20	PC	0.0	12.5
Isle of Wight	28	S	0.0	**
Jersey	33	S	0.0	13.6
Keswick	25	PC	0.0	**
Kinloss	**	**	0.0	2.9
Leeds	28	PC	0.0	**
Lerwick	15	M	0.0	8.9
Leuchars	27	R	0.0	8.0
Lincoln	28	S	0.0	13.0
Liverpool	27	C	0.0	**
London	30	S	0.0	12.5
Lyneham	31	S	0.0	13.5
Manchester	29	S	0.0	12.1
Margate	24	S	0.0	10.5
Milford Haven	28	S	0.0	**
Newcastle	26	S	0.0	**
Nottingham	29	S	0.0	12.0
Orkney	21	C	0.0	**
Oxford	31	S	0.0	**
Plymouth	31	S	0.0	**
Portland	24	PC	0.0	**
Scilly, St Mary's	23	PC	0.0	**
Shoreham	30	S	0.0	12.6
Shrewsbury	29	S	0.0	11.3
Snowdonia	27	S	0.0	**
Southend	23	S	0.0	11.5
South Uist	18	D	0.8	**
Stornoway	18	PC	0.0	2.6
Tiree	17	C	0.0	4.7
Whitehaven	23	R	0.0	12.5
Wick	**	S	0.0	**
Yeovilton	32	S	0.0	13.5

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	34	PC	Madeira	28	PC
Amsterdam	26	S	Madrid	34	S
Athens	33	S	Malaga	31	PC
Auckland	15	R	Mallorca	35	PC
Bahrain	44	S	Malta	34	S
Bangkok	32	PC	Melbourne	13	B
Barbados	30	PC	Mexico City	23	PC
Barcelona	32	PC	Miami	33	PC
Beijing	26	R	Milan	34	S
Beirut	**	**	Mombasa	29	PC
Belgrade	31	S	Montreal	26	B
Berlin	24	S	Moscow	14	SH
Bermuda	31	SH	Mumbai	29	R
Bordeaux	37	S	Munich	28	S
Brussels	30	S	Nairobi	25	S
Bucharest	30	S	Naples	35	S
Budapest	27	S	New Orleans	32	T
Buenos Aires	12	DU	New York	30	B
Cairo	36	S	Nice	31	PC
Calcutta	32	**	Nicosia	34	PC
Canberra	11	C	Oslo	19	S
Cape Town	22	S	Paris	32	S
Chicago	22	R	Perth	17	PC
Copenhagen	18	PC	Prague	22	S
Corfu	36	PC	Reykjavik	16	SH
Delhi	34	**	Riga	18	SH
Dubai	44	PC	Rio de Janeiro	19	M
Dublin	25	PC	Riyadh	45	PC
Faro	28	S	Rome	34	S
Florence	38	PC	San Francisco	22	PC
Frankfurt	28	S	Santiago	8	B
Geneva	30	S	São Paulo	15	C
Gibraltar	26	PC	Seoul	30	S
Helsinki	17	SH	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	35	PC	Singapore	32	B
Honolulu	**	**	St Petersburg	16	B
Istanbul	32	S	Stockholm	19	S
Jerusalem	34	S	Sydney	19	S
Johannesburg	10	PC	Tel Aviv	34	S
Kuala Lumpur	33	PC	Tenerife	29	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	25	SH
Lanzarote	30	PC	Vancouver	21	PC
Las Palmas	28	PC	Venice	34	S
Lima	22	B	Vienna	26	S
Lisbon	30	S	Warsaw	21	S
Los Angeles	26	PC	Washington	29	B
Luxor	41	S	Zurich	30	S

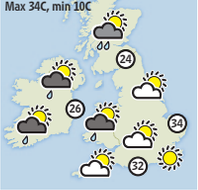
Five days ahead

Hot and mainly dry for the rest of this week, unsettled with rain and showers into next week

Tomorrow

Staying dry with sunny spells across most of England. Patchy cloud and outbreaks of rain in Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

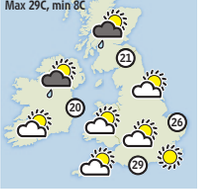
Max 34C, min 10C



Saturday

Bright intervals and patchy rain across parts of Ireland and Scotland. Dry elsewhere with the best of the sunshine in the southeast.

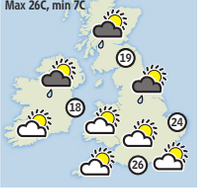
Max 29C, min 8C



Sunday

Dry with sunny periods in southern Britain and Ireland. Cloudy with a few spots of rain elsewhere, heaviest in the afternoon.

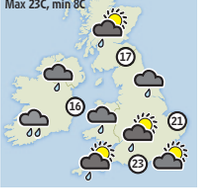
Max 26C, min 7C



Monday

An unsettled day across Britain and Ireland with thick cloud and widespread outbreaks of rain and showers.

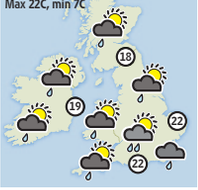
Max 23C, min 8C



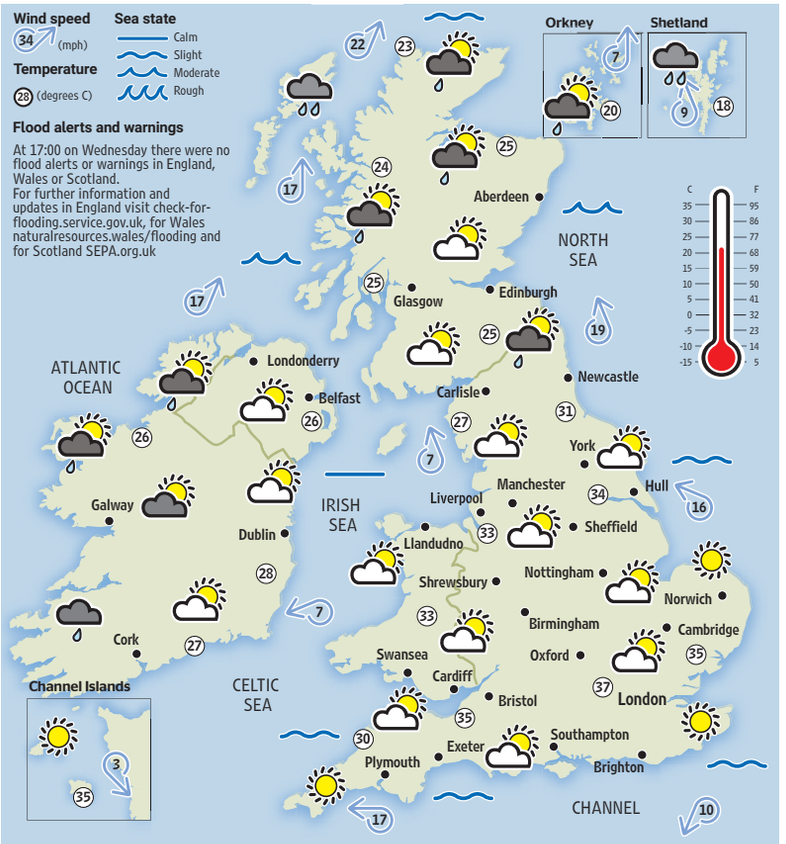
Tuesday

Remaining unsettled with bright periods and showery outbreaks of rain, heaviest in central England and western Ireland.

Max 22C, min 7C



The Times weather page is provided by WeatherQuest

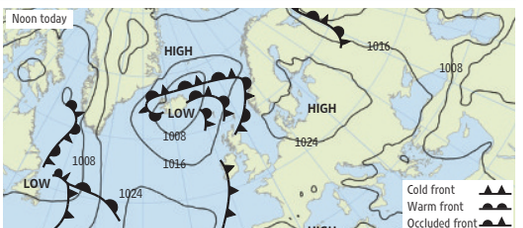


General situation: Dry and hot with sunny spells for most, patchy cloud and rain in the far north and west.
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: A day of bright periods and patchy rain in the west, heaviest through the morning. Mainly dry with sunny spells elsewhere. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 28C (82F), minimum 13C (55F).
NW Scotland, NE Scotland, Aberdeen, Cen Highland, Moray Firth, N Isles, Argyll: Patchy cloud and outbreaks of rain and showers, most widespread in the northwest through late afternoon. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 25C (77F), minimum 13C (55F).
Edinburgh and Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Borders, Lake District, IoM, NE Eng: Largely dry with sunny intervals and a chance of the odd isolated shower in northeast England later. Light to moderate south to southwesterly winds. Maximum 31C (88F), minimum 14C (57F).
NW Eng, W Mids, Wales, Cen S Eng, SW Eng, Channel Is: Dry and hot with sunny spells, perhaps turning a little hazy later. Light to moderate south to southeasterly winds. Maximum 35C (95F), minimum 15C (59F).
London, E Anglia, E Mids, Cen N Eng, SE Eng, E Eng: A dry and hot day with the best of the sunshine across Kent and East Anglia through the afternoon. Light to moderate south to southeasterly winds. Maximum 37C (99F), minimum 15C (59F).

Tides

Tidal predictions.
Heights in metres. All times in local time

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	02:13	4.4	14:51	4.3
Avonmouth	08:30	13.3	20:48	13.8
Belfast	--:--	--	12:25	3.3
Cardiff	08:22	12.2	20:40	12.7
Devonport	07:05	5.3	19:17	5.7
Dover	--:--	--	12:27	6.8
Dublin	00:12	4.2	12:48	4.0
Falmouth	06:30	5.0	18:45	5.4
Greenock	01:12	3.5	14:04	3.3
Harwich	--:--	--	12:58	4.1
Holyhead	11:37	5.6	23:49	5.9
Hull	07:16	7.7	19:59	7.6
Leith	03:28	5.7	15:59	5.7
Liverpool	--:--	--	12:28	9.4
London Bridge	02:53	7.2	15:18	7.0
Lowestoft	10:22	2.7	23:12	2.5
Milford Haven	07:28	7.1	19:47	7.4
Morecambe	--:--	--	12:38	9.5
Newhaven	--:--	--	12:33	6.8
Newquay	06:18	7.0	18:37	7.4
Oban	07:14	3.9	19:18	4.2
Penzance	05:51	5.4	18:10	5.8
Portsmouth	--:--	--	12:42	4.8
Shoreham	--:--	--	12:42	6.5
Southampton	01:23	4.3	12:14	4.6
Swansea	07:35	9.4	19:52	9.8
Tees	04:39	5.6	17:13	5.6
Weymouth	08:20	2.0	20:19	2.3



Synoptic situation

An occluded front associated with a low-pressure system over Iceland will bring patchy cloud and showery outbreaks of rain over parts of Scotland, heaviest in the north. A cold front will bring bright periods and a few spots of rain to western Ireland. High pressure in the far east will lead to a dry day elsewhere with plenty of sunshine.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Ross-on-Wye, 35.1C
Coldest: South Newington, Oxfordshire, 8.2C
Wettest: Machrihanish, 3.6mm
Sunniest: Bournemouth, Dorset, 13.8hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 05.41
Sun sets: 20.28
Moon rises: 04.56
Moon sets: 20.29
First quarter: August 20

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	21:25-05:03
Belfast	21:30-05:28
Birmingham	21:07-05:18
Cardiff	21:09-05:27
Exeter	21:08-05:30
Glasgow	21:28-05:17
Liverpool	21:15-05:20
London	20:57-05:14
Manchester	21:12-05:17
Newcastle	21:14-05:09
Norwich	20:55-05:05
Penzance	21:15-05:40
Sheffield	21:08-05:14

Weather Eye

Paul Simons

When the Opec oil-producing countries cut their supply in 1973, the price of oil almost quadrupled, setting off a global energy crisis.

That crisis later inspired Granada Television to make a series, *A House for the Future*, about a project to build an energy-efficient family home from a derelict old coach house in Macclesfield, Cheshire.

The project began in 1974 by making the building sound and then fitting high levels of heat insulation. External brick walls were clad with timber boards and heat insulation materials, and the roof, ceilings and floors were also well insulated. A south-facing conservatory collected heat from sunshine, and the warm air was piped into bedrooms in the house. A heat pump was used to improve energy efficiency, which was a far-sighted development at the time. Installing solar roof panels to generate electricity was far too expensive in the 1970s, so instead a large array of solar water panels was built on the roof that collected hot water, and a homemade wind turbine was erected in the garden.

When the house was completed, a family of four moved in and tracked their energy use. They found that the best energy savings by far came from the insulation and the heat pump. The contribution from solar water heating was disappointingly small, and the wind turbine fell over and was not replaced.

In many ways the project was ahead of its time. Renewable energy these days has vastly improved and become widespread through cheap solar panels and arrays of wind turbines, but insulation for buildings still remains the bedrock for conserving energy, reducing heating bills and cutting carbon emissions.

As for climate change, a few scientists in the 1970s believed that the world's climate was cooling, which received a lot of publicity, although this proved to be only a temporary regional effect. Most climate scientists recognised that the global climate was warming, and 50 years later the consequences are increasingly clear.

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Sport

Schedule is a mess – players must go from Hundred to Tests in three days

Mike Atherton

Chief Cricket Correspondent

As summer turned to autumn last year, those who had paid premium prices for the opening one-day international at the start of September have probably not forgotten their experience. England's performance that day at Headingley against South Africa was among the most deplorable in recent times. The list is long in that regard, but no one who was there that day could deny the gruesomeness of it all.

To recap briefly. England were bowled out for 131 in fewer than 25 overs — half the allotted time, in other words — having been 44 for one initially. South Africa won in the 21st over by seven wickets, after Aiden Markram gave Sonny Baker a debut to forget, pounding him to all parts of the ground. The game was scheduled for 100 overs, but lasted 44 all told. Those who paid for entry left thoroughly disillusioned and short-changed — not a feeling Yorkshire folk cherish.

It was hard to attach total blame to the players. They played atrociously, and that had to be acknowledged, but the context was important. The Hundred had finished just two days before — Joe Root had been involved in the final and Harry Brook and Adil Rashid in the eliminator — which meant that the squad arrived to Leeds in dribs and drabs. They played like a team whose minds were elsewhere and who had not moved from franchise into international mode, from 100 balls to 50-over cricket.

The challenge of transitioning out of the Hundred is accentuated this year. The first Test against Pakistan, also at Headingley, begins three days after the final of the Hundred (two days in the unlikely event of rain). Clearly, adapting from 100-ball cricket to Test cricket is a greater contrast than from 50-over cricket; lessons no doubt will have been taken from last year's schemozzle, but the challenge remains.

Of the 16-man squad for the first Test, all but three — Ollie Robinson, Emilio Gay and Shoaib Bashir — have been involved in the Hundred. Of those, Gay is certain to play (if fit and recovered from his shoulder injury); Robinson is likely to do so, although he is expecting to become a father again around the time of the Test and Bashir could miss out — a remarkable possibility during the hottest, driest summer in living memory. The rest must all switch on to the demands of Test cricket quickly.

For bowlers, this is a physical challenge above all. During the past month they have bowled a maximum of 20 balls in each of what will be about eight matches — about what they might be expected to bowl in a single Test match innings, in other words. The danger is of injury, once they have to increase that workload significantly and suddenly. To alleviate that risk, they have been tasked to bowl 190 balls a week with a Dukes ball around their competitive matches in the Hundred. That should help to keep, as they say, their "loads" up.

Co-ordinating all this is Troy Cooley, the ECB's lead bowling coach. Cooley is an excellent and knowledgeable coach, having been with England way back during the 2005 Ashes, and his most recent experience was in a similar position with the BCCI. Because of the length of the Indian Premier League and because of India's extensive international programme, he will have had a lot of experience in readying the fast bowlers for Test cricket while playing in the IPL. It is not easy, but at least, in Cooley, they have someone who knows the ropes.

As well as physical adjustments, there are also tactical tweaks to make. For the past month bowlers have been in largely defensive mode, trying to prevent runscoring, by keeping batsmen guessing through exploiting their range of skills, such as slower balls and yorkers. Now they must revert to a more attacking, wicket-taking mindset and reacquaint themselves quickly with bowling consistently for maidens as well.

For batsmen, the challenge is technical and mental. In a recent article for ESPNcricinfo Daryll Cullinan, the former South Africa batsman, argued that, such are the distinctive demands of the formats, that becoming accomplished in equal measure across the three is unachievable. That may be slightly overplaying the challenge, but there is no doubt that moving from one to the other is difficult, such is the pace at which the formats are diverging.

First-class cricket, especially if the ball is swinging or seaming, demands a batsman play the ball late, under their eyeline, holding a more sideways position with leading shoulder and front side of the body predominant. T20 cricket requires the ball to be taken early, to clear the in-field or the boundary, and with power coming from the torque of the hips, the trailing half of the body is much more active. It is a different technique entirely.

And, clearly, the mentality is totally different. Though it is a far less defensive game than before, an element of defence and survival is still required in Test cricket; you need to be able to stay in to score and the longer the game the increased value there is on a wicket, making the protection of it important. Clearly in the shortest format, scoring quickly is the only thing — as Ollie Pope, who became the first batsman in England to be given the shepherd's crook and retired out recently, discovered.

Root, who played for Welsh Fire last night, must quickly change his mindset to Tests

When Dan Lawrence was picked in the squad last week, the national selector, Marcus North, made note that he is among the leading runscorers in Division One of the County Championship. Put aside for a moment the (fair) criticism that my colleague Steve James will have about potential England players needing to bat in the top four for their counties (Lawrence has batted mostly at No5 for Surrey this year, occasionally at four), and think about the structure of his season.

He was in ripe form early on, during the consistent run of championship games in April and May. For Surrey, he made scores of 5, 161*, 31 ,0, 125, 13, 104, 21, 1, 218, 101, 8 and 0. Since the last of those games, he has played in the Blast and in the Hundred, scoring one half-century and facing 139 balls in two months. Batting at five is a cosy number in first-class cricket but opportunity is limited in that position in the Hundred. The modern player is used to moving from format to format, but it doesn't alleviate the challenge.

There will, one imagines, be a degree of nervousness among ECB executives during the first Test next week. The schedule is, after all, on them. It is they who have sold off a third of the summer for £500million; it is they who have guaranteed, in return for that cash, that their new franchise partners will have a monopoly of the month and complete control over England-contracted players during it.

Last year, after the debacle at Headingley, Richard Thompson, the chairman of the ECB, acknowledged the problem. "There are no easy answers," he said. "We can't have our cake and eat it. We want England players to play [in the Hundred]. This is our premium white-ball competition and we want England players to play in it. What we have to do is to find a way of ensuring the schedule before and after [the tournament] is better. Take this [2025] year: the gap was a day or two days, that can't be right.

"We've done this deal in the middle of a rights schedule. Come 2028, when we cut the next deal for the next four years, we can cut this in a different way. We might have a short-term issue here, but we can overcome that," he said. Quite how they cut it in a different way remains to be seen, given that the Hundred will not be shortened. Will the owners demand more bang (games) for their buck? Will that mean less Test cricket?

The ambitions of the owners and the broader game are not necessarily aligned and tension in future is likely. That is the deeper issue to play out in the next rights cycle — as England's players prepare to discover whether they can transition from one format to another rather more smoothly than they did last summer.

McCullum is brilliant and Stokes could come back, says Root

CONTINUED FROM BACK

and culture. As part of this, the curfew will no longer be in place. We will ensure all players have a clear understanding of expectations when they come together for the upcoming Test series."

Root and his squad meet up in Leeds on Monday before the first Test against Pakistan on Wednesday and it is clear that the new captain has discussed some of these off-field matters with Fleming, even though he does not officially start his role until after the end of this three-match series.

Marcus Trescothick is the interim head coach because Fleming, appointed after Brendon McCullum was sacked as red-ball coach, had pre-existing commitments, although it is expected that he will be present towards the end of the series, albeit not officially coaching. Root also left the door open for a Stokes comeback after the former captain stunned the cricket world by retiring mid-match against New Zealand in June. Asked if he would welcome Stokes back, Root replied: "I don't know — let's get there first."

Root revealed he was "gutted" about the sacking of McCullum, saying he believed that the former New Zealand captain "really got the best out of me personally". "I love the way he sees the game and the way he's opened my eyes up to looking at it slightly differently," he said. "I feel like he's a brilliant coach. I'm very glad we still get to work together in the white-ball stuff."

Root did, however, welcome the new Fleming era. "We have crossed paths a bit over the last few years when he's coached different teams around the world and is someone I have always admired," he said. "The way that he's always held himself as a captain first and foremost. His record as a coach has been exceptional, albeit in T20 cricket."

Root stepped down as captain in 2022 and believes he will learn from some of the mistakes he made in his first spell in charge. One of those being his admission that he needs to manage Jofra Archer better, admitting that "at times I did overbowl him and overuse him".

Salisbury

Thunderer

5.30 Decalogue
6.04 Tiora Time
6.34 Serenetta
7.04 Siena Storm
7.34 Green Sky (nb)
8.04 Supplicate

Going: good to firm
Draw: none — **Racing TV**

5.30 Handicap (£4,580: 1m) (7)

1 (4) 54504 **KIMEKO GLORY** 15 (P) C Hills 4-10-1 — **K S McHugh**
2 (3) -0062 **SYDNEY ROCK** 7 Oliver Cole 3-9-9 — **J Bradnam**
3 (5) 6-043 **DECALOGUE** 7 (P) J Osborne 3-9-8 — **Toby Moore**
4 (7) -6030 **THISCOULDBEFUN** 24 (P,D) J S Moore 4-9-7 — **Isobelle Chalmers (3)**
5 (1) 23565 **ZIPWIRE** 33 (P) J S Moore 3-9-5 — **Jude Fernandes**
6 (2) 20041 **AMATHUS** 23 (V,C) P Chamings 9-9-0 — **A Redman**
7 (6) 00000 **EBN SABT** 9 (V,D) B Lund 3-8-12 — **M Slater**

9-4 Sydney Rock, 11-4 Amathus, 7-2 Kimeko Glory, 4-1 Decalogue, 14-1 Zipwire, 16-1 Thiscouldbefun, 50-1 Ebn Sabt.

Thunderer's choice: Decalogue can be slow away, first-time cheekpieces may help **Dangers:** Kimeko Glory, Amathus

6.04 Restricted Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £8,100: 7f) (5)

1 (1) 31 **TIORA TIME** 12 (D) Tom Clover 9-3 — **C T Keane**
2 (5) 6 **ALL ANGELS** 24 E Walker 9-2 — **K Shoemark**
3 (4) 2 **FLOODING** 26 M Botti 9-2 — **O Murphy**
4 (2) 0 **VIRTUE HUMBLE** 27 A Perrett 8-13 — **J Mitchell**
5 (3) 00 **POLGARIA** 9 R Teal 8-10 — **E Greatrex**

11-10 Tiora Time, 11-8 Flooding, 10-1 All Angels, 14-1 Polgaria, 20-1 Virtue Humble.

Thunderer's choice: Tiora Time confirmed debut promise in decisive fashion at Doncaster, can follow up **Danger:** Flooding

6.34 Novice Stakes (£5,400: 7f) (2)

1 (2) 31- **SERENETTA** 253 (D) R Beckett 3-9-7 — **C T Keane**
2 (1) **REFORMATION** A Balding 3-9-5 — **O Murphy**

2-5 Serenetta, 2-1 Reformation.

Thunderer's choice: Serenetta's siblings include Bluestocking, the Arc winner; won in style at Kempton

7.04 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £20,616: 1m) (5)

1 (3) **CAELAN'S ROSE** A Balding 9-2 — **W Carver**
2 (5) 35 **CLARITY** 14 A Balding 9-2 — **O Murphy**
3 (2) 4 **INDIAN LIGHTS** 26 M Bell 9-2 — **B M Coen**
4 (1) 0 **ORCHARD HATCHES** 14 M Tregoning 9-2 — **E Greatrex**
5 (4) 4 **SIENA STORM** 14 E Walker 9-2 — **K Shoemark**

15-8 Siena Storm, 2-1 Indian Lights, 5-2 Clarity, 12-1 Caelan's Rose, 16-1 Orchard Hatches.

Thunderer's choice: Siena Storm changed hands for €600,000 at breeze-ups; shaped well on debut at Goodwood **Danger:** Clarity

7.34 Handicap (£23,193: 1m 4f) (8)

1 (8) 30-06 **MODEL YUKO** 18 (H) R Varian 4-10-2 — **R P Downey**
2 (6) 45111 **GREEN SKY** 27 (D) B Millman 6-10-1 — **O Murphy**
3 (3) 01444 **PERCY'S DAYDREAM** 18 (D) D O'Meara 4-10-0 — **B M Coen**
4 (1) 26-03 **GLORYOUS** 33 J Osborne 4-9-12 — **W Carson**
5 (2) 0-611 **COUNTER INTUITIVE** 27 (D) E Walker 3-9-3 — **K Shoemark**
6 (5) -4612 **RUBY WEDDING** 19 A Balding 3-9-3 — **A Redman (7)**
7 (7) 01211 **LIVEINTHELIGHT** 22 (D) Ollie Sangster 3-8-13 **J Mitchell**
8 (4) 02641 **ROSSA RAHEEN** 19 (CD) Ollie Sangster 3-8-9 **S D Bowen**

5-2 Green Sky, 7-2 Liveinthelight, 4-1 Counter Intuitive, 6-1 Rossa Raheen, 7-1 Ruby Wedding, 12-1 Model Yuko, 14-1 Percy's Daydream, 20-1 Gloryous.

Thunderer's choice: Green Sky won past two starts at York and Newbury, can defy 8lb hike in weights **Danger:** Ruby Wedding

8.04 Handicap (3-Y-O: £5,888: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (1) 2314 **SEVEN SISTERS** 19 (BF,D) R Beckett 9-7 — **E Greatrex**
2 (2) 51-11 **SUPPLICATE** 14 (D) R Varian 9-7 — **J Mitchell**
3 (3) 23201 **SUDBURY HILL** 19 (P,CD) Harry Derham 9-6 — **B M Coen**
4 (4) 06220 **AKHO MEZZNA** 19 (B,C) Jack Jones 9-5 — **O Murphy**
5 (6) 11053 **ON THE INLET** 27 Dr R Newland 9-5 — **Ebrahim Nader**
6 (5) -1610 **STORM POINT** 35 (BF) E Walker 9-4 — **K Shoemark**

11-8 Supplicate, 4-1 Sudbury Hill, 9-2 Seven Sisters, 7-1 Storm Point, 8-1 On The Inlet, 10-1 Akho Mezzna.

Thunderer's choice: Supplicate goes from strength to strength; 4lb rise for Nottingham win looks fair **Danger:** Seven Sisters

Beverley

Thunderer

2.15 What A Girl Wants
2.45 Concert Pitch
3.15 Ariane Sky
3.45 Ventura Express
4.15 Mr Moonshine
4.45 Saxon Grace (nap)

Going: good to firm-good in places
Draw: 5f-7f, low numbers best — **Racing TV**

2.15 Novice Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,234: 5f) (6)

1 (6) 1 **NOT MY TYPE** 20 (D) W Haggas 9-9 — **T Marquand**
2 (1) **CLASSYFIED** T Easterby 9-2 — **D Allan**
3 (5) **EMPRESS PRINCESS** J Tate 9-2 — **C Lee**
4 (3) 54 **FLOWER YOUMZAIN** 49 K Ryan 9-2 — **T Eaves**
5 (4) **QUEEN OF TEARS** T Easterby 9-2 — **S B Kirrane**
6 (2) 32204 **WHAT A GIRL WANTS** 49 K P De Foy 9-2 — **S James**

11-8 What A Girl Wants, 9-4 Not My Type, 5-1 Empress Princess, 13-2 Queen Of Tears, 12-1 Flower Youmzain, 33-1 Classyfied.

2.45 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,004: 5f) (10)

1 (3) 66222 **CONCERT PITCH** 2 B Ellison 9-9 — **B Robinson**
2 (6) 6034 **ENEMY ACTION** 20 (P) O Pears 9-5 — **H Russell**
3 (8) 403 **MRS MOLE** 29 Steph Hollinshead 9-4 — **C Lee**
4 (10) 04330 **MARDY BUM** 20 (H) D O'Meara 9-4 — **M Winn**
5 (1) 61646 **LAIRY MARY** 20 (CD) T Easterby 9-2 — **D Fentiman**
6 (2) 605 **KAIULANI SPIRIT** 29 (B) T Easterby 9-1 — **D Allan**
7 (5) 064 **JOHNS POWER** 29 Roger Fell 9-0 — **Joanna Mason**
8 (7) 00453 **TARGA** 22 A Watson 8-12 — **L Morris**
9 (9) 050 **GOOD FIGHTER** 21 (B) I Mohammed & J Santos 8-9 — **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
10 (4) 500 **ARTICULATE** 12 K Frost 8-3 — **W Pyle**

4-1 Enemy Action, 9-2 Targa, 5-1 Concert Pitch, Mrs Mole, 8-1 Johns Power, 10-1 Lairy Mary, Good Fighter, 12-1 others.

3.15 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,004: 7f) (11)

1 (4) 5541 **ARIANE SKY** 16 (D) James Owen 9-9 — **Mason Paetel (5)**
2 (7) 0502 **STATE OF GOLD** 56 Craig Lidster 9-9 — **W Pyle**
3 (1) 61233 **AMANTHA** 6 (D) B Ellison 9-8 — **B Robinson**
4 (11) 53665 **CLARET AND BLUES** 20 R & P Fahey 9-6 — **Doubtful**
5 (2) 050 **COURT LEGEND** 34 M & D Easterby 9-6 — **B Garritty**
6 (8) 5603 **SOVEREIGN BEACH** 20 Ollie Sangster 9-5 — **S James**
7 (3) 5004 **BONJOUR BELLE** 6 B Ellison 9-1 — **F McManoman**
8 (10) 6505 **FARNDALE** 40 T Easterby 9-0 — **D Allan**
9 (5) 050 **WELLS FARGO STAGE** 38 T Easterby 8-12 — **D Fentiman**
10 (9) 500 **YORKSHIRE DREAM** 47 B Haslam 8-8 — **A Mullen**
11 (6) 000 **WHISPER ANGEL** 13 N Tinkler 8-5 — **A Jary (3)**

3-1 Ariane Sky, 7-2 Sovereign Beach, 9-2 State of Gold, Amantha, 12-1 Court Legend, Farndale, 14-1 Bonjour Belle, Wells Fargo Stage.

3.45 Handicap (£4,527: 5f) (12)

1 (7) 1-202 **CALL TO ACTION** 70 (B,BF,D) M & D Easterby 5-9-9 — **L Chalkley (7)**
2 (1) 3-015 **HOLBACHE** 54 (P,D) J Camacho 8-9-9 **T Kiely-Marshall (5)**
3 (6) 14006 **CASTAN** 12 (P,D) B Smart 6-9-8 — **P Mulrennan**
4 (4) 50205 **AMERICAN BAY** 12 (D) P Midgley 5-9-8 — **J Hart**
5 (9) 54205 **GOOD EARTH** 13 (CD) M Herrington 9-9-6 — **T Eaves**
6 (12) 32135 **INGLEBY ARCHIE** 20 (CD) Adrian Nicholls 5-9-5 **J Garritty**
7 (3) 54464 **VENTURA EXPRESS** 19 (CD) P Midgley 9-9-5 — **D Nolan**
8 (5) 00503 **SQUEALER** 23 (BF,CD) N Tinkler 6-9-4 — **A Jary (3)**
9 (2) 05231 **SHAZANI** 12 S Bowring 4-9-4 — **L Edmunds**
10 (8) 2300- **INFINITY BLUE** 304 (H) J Camacho 5-8-13 — **R Sexton**
11 (11) 22064 **JOJO RABBIT** 16 (CD) R Carr 8-8-13 — **JP Sullivan**
12 (10) 50010 **OPAL STORM** 16 (P,T,CD) B Rothwell 6-8-5 **F McManoman**

7-2 Shazani, 4-1 Call To Action, 7-1 American Bay, 8-1 Ingleby Archie, 10-1 Holbache, Ventura Express, Jojo Rabbit, Good Earth.

4.15 Handicap (£4,527: 1m 4f) (6)

1 (4) 31-40 **RETURN WITH GOLD** 19 (P) O Pears 4-10-0 — **H Russell**
2 (1) 50100 **SISTERANDBROTHER** 7 (CD) Joey Ramsden 8-9-13 **L Edmunds**
3 (5) 01054 **GREY FABLE** 19 (T,D) K Thornton (Ire) 6-9-7 — **J Hart**
4 (6) -5223 **WARDLAW** 48 (H,BF) Sir M Prescott 3-9-7 — **L Morris**
5 (3) 05643 **THAT DARN CANTOR** 12 (P) E Dunlop 3-9-6 — **C Fallon**
6 (2) 4-523 **MR MOONSHINE** 19 (P) R & P Fahey 3-9-4 — **Oisin Orr**

5-2 Mr Moonshine, 3-1 That Darn Cantor, Wardlaw, 4-1 Grey Fable, 8-1 Sisterandbrother, 25-1 Return With Gold.

4.45 Handicap (£4,004: 1m 100yd) (10)

1 (8) 56-55 **DUMFRIES** 16 (C,D) R Carr 6-9-12 — **JP Sullivan**
2 (3) 22620 **AMARACHI** 167 J Parr 4-9-11 — **C Fallon**
3 (2) 64031 **SAXON GRACE** 5 (D) D Bourke 3-9-8(6ex) — **Shane Gray**
4 (9) 31406 **BACK FROM DUBAI** 12 (C,D) S Bowring 9-9-7 **L Edmunds**
5 (4) 22460 **COPPER AND FIVE** 28 (P,CD) R Carr 10-9-6 **Joanna Mason**
6 (7) 00046 **TEN SIXTY SIX** 33 D O'Meara 3-9-3 — **M Winn**
7 (5) 00064 **SWEET CICELY** 25 (P) M Sowersby 4-9-3 — **W Pyle**
8 (6) 06005 **AURORA'S DOUBLESIX** 10 (H) B Rothwell 4-9-3 — **F McManoman**
9 (1) 50-04 **ROYAL SIZZLER** 51 (H) M Dods 3-9-0 — **S B Kirrane**
10 (10) 36525 **HARSWELL RIVER** 17 (P,D) Roger Fell 3-8-13 **C Horgan (5)**

6-4 Saxon Grace, 5-1 Back From Dubai, 6-1 Dumfries, 7-1 Copper And Five, 8-1 Harswell River, 12-1 Royal Sizzler, Amarachi, 14-1 Ten Sixty Six.

Lingfield

Thunderer

5.23 Kaaranah
5.58 Aljoon
6.28 Split Elevens
6.58 Zaltalla
7.28 Neswick
7.58 South West

Going: standard
Draw: 5f-1m, low numbers best **Sky Sports Racing**

5.23 Handicap (£4,187: 1m 2f) (9)

1 (7) 16511 **KAARANAH** 23 J Butler 8-10-2 — **J Callan**
2 (9) 01505 **CITY OF GOD** 69 (P) M Attwater 4-10-1 — **F Marsh**
3 (6) -1502 **BARRY'S BOY** 38 D Coakley 4-10-1 — **G Bass**
4 (2) 64123 **JACK SPAROWE** 61 (B,D) J Butler 7-9-11 — **D Probert**
5 (8) 44312 **BOOZIEBRUNCH** 28 (B,D) S Woods 3-9-9 — **R Havlin**
6 (5) 6-06 **EAGLES ATTIRE** 101 Oliver Cole 3-9-8 — **D Muscutt**
7 (3) -1410 **BARBURY BOY** 40 (D) A King 3-9-8 — **Harry Vigors (5)**
8 (1) 42110 **ALICE DE CLARE** 56 (D) J Fanshawe 3-9-6 — **C Shepherd**
9 (4) 654-0 **TURKU** 38 (V,BF) S & E Crisford 3-9-4 — **D Keenan**

11-4 Kaaranah, 5-1 Jack Sparowe, 6-1 Barry's Boy, Booziebrunch, 7-1 Alice De Clare, 8-1 Eagles Attire, 10-1 Barbury Boy, Turku, 20-1 City Of God.

5.58 Maiden Stakes (2-Y-O: £5,234: 7f) (12)

1 (12) 02 **ALJOON** 22 Jack Jones 9-7 — **Jason Watson**
2 (2) **BRUSHSTROKE** T Kent 9-7 — **J Callan**
3 (9) 0 **CALENDAR BOY** 44 E J-Houghton 9-7 — **C Bishop**
4 (8) **HUWA BAREE** C Johnston 9-7 — **C Shepherd**
5 (3) 00 **LUCKY LARRY** 45 Jack Morland 9-7 — **J Peate**
6 (10) **MR BADGER** M Tregoning 9-7 — **D Muscutt**
7 (1) **NORTHERN EXPOSURE** (H) P Owens 9-7 **Arron D'Arcy (7)**
8 (5) 05 **ZONNEVELD** 13 J S Moore 9-7 — **D Probert**
9 (11) 0 **BOOMSHAKALAK** 36 Zoe Hawkins 9-2 — **W Cox**
10 (7) 406 **GRAVASTAR** 31 R Hannon 9-2 — **J Leavy**
11 (4) 06 **KISS CAM** 23 R Hughes 9-2 — **F Marsh**
12 (6) 06 **ROBERTS LEGACY** 19 Lemos Souza 9-2 — **D Keenan**

15-8 Aljoon, 11-4 Huwa Baree, 7-1 Brushstroke, 8-1 Mr Badger, 10-1 Northern Exposure, 12-1 Gravastar, 16-1 Calendar Boy, 20-1 others.

6.28 Handicap (£3,664: 7f) (13)

1 (12) 45601 **LERWICK** 9 (B,E,D) M Loughnane 6-10-6(5ex) **Hope Regan (7)**
2 (10) 10-33 **SPIRIT OF BREEZE** 24 (T,CD) G & J Moore 6-10-1 **F Marsh**
3 (1) 54124 **SPLIT ELEVENS** 46 (BF,CD) J Butler 8-9-12 — **J Callan**
4 (2) 20361 **ELVETHAM** 9 (B,C) C Allen 4-9-12(5ex) — **D Keenan**
5 (4) 21004 **QUICK QUASAR** 13 (B,D) A Watson 3-9-10 — **W Cox**
6 (7) 06323 **MIDNIGHT'S DREAM** 14 (V,D) J Parr 5-9-9 — **D Muscutt**
7 (6) 3-020 **WIND SUMMER** 136 (V) I Mohammed & J Santos 3-9-8 — **Dominique Van Der Kraats (7)**
8 (9) 31606 **FRANCISCO** 20 (T,V,CD) P Chamings 5-9-8 — **Charlie Tucker (7)**
9 (8) 2-602 **CHELIO** 69 D Coakley 3-9-6 — **G Bass**
10 (3) 6-600 **BLUE SAMUNA** 13 (H) James Owen 3-9-4 — **R Havlin**
11 (11) 0-602 **CAPTIVE BEAUTY** 23 R Burdon 3-9-3 — **D Probert**
12 (5) 6-664 **MY DAD TOM** 47 (P) R Hannon 3-9-3 — **J Leavy**
13 (13) 00600 **OXFORD CIRCUS** 64 James Owen 4-9-2 — **C Shepherd**

3-1 Lerwick, 11-2 Elvetham, 6-1 Captive Beauty, 8-1 Midnight's Dream, 10-1 Split Elevens, Quick Quasar, 12-1 Spirit Of Breeze, Oxford Circus.

6.58 Classified Stakes (£3,664: 6f) (9)

1 (5) 4301 **PURE PASSION** 8 S C Williams 3-9-11 — **C R Lyons (7)**
2 (9) 66502 **DR ALI** 5 (V,D) J R Jenkins 4-9-9 — **J Peate**
3 (4) 03600 **GLOBAL EFFORT** 150 (P,D) P McEntee 6-9-9 — **T Heard**
4 (7) 04545 **PORFIN** 46 (P,CD) P McEntee 8-9-9 — **Grace McEntee**
5 (6) 03045 **ROMAN SPRING** 5 (T,C,D) R Cook & J Bridger 6-9-9 **J Leavy**
6 (2) -4023 **ZALTALLA** 22 (C) G & J Moore 5-9-9 — **D Probert**
7 (3) 32242 **MY MATE MACKLEY** 4 (P) Adam Kirby 3-9-5 — **C Bishop**
8 (1) 33330 **REAL GOLD** 14 (P) R Cook & J Bridger 3-9-5 — **J Callan**
9 (8) 600 **RIDGER** 21 Ollie Sangster 3-9-5 — **S Donohoe**

9-4 Pure Passion, 4-1 Zaltalla, 5-1 Ridger, 6-1 Dr Ali, 8-1 My Mate Mackley, 10-1 Roman Spring, 12-1 Real Gold, 16-1 Porfin, 33-1 Global Effort.

7.28 Novice Stakes (£6,480: 1m 2f) (9)

1 (3) 54 **BLUE HILL** 36 I Mohammed & J Santos 3-9-2 — **B Sayette**
2 (8) 00 **CHAMPAGNE BEAU** 31 P Chamings 3-9-2 — **J Leavy**
3 (1) 0-3 **DOVE TALE** 8 (H) J & T Gosden 3-9-2 — **R Havlin**
4 (5) 3 **NESWICK** 108 M Tregoning 3-9-2 — **D Probert**
5 (6) 5-5 **OKLAHOMA DREAM** 60 (H) D Menuisier 3-9-2 **Jason Watson**
6 (7) **PARAONE** H Main 3-9-2 — **F Marsh**
7 (9) 0 **PROTECTRIX** 21 J Butler 3-9-2 — **J Callan**
8 (4) 443-5 **SHANGRI LA** 30 D M Simcock 3-9-2 — **C Shepherd**
9 (2) 54 **WALKING ON STARS** 14 Sir M Prescott 3-9-2 **D E Hogan**

5-2 Dove Tale, 11-4 Neswick, 3-1 Shangri La, 5-1 Walking On Stars, 10-1 Blue Hill, 20-1 Oklahoma Dream, 25-1 Paraone, 50-1 Protectrix, Champagne Beau.

7.58 Nursery (2-Y-O: £4,187: 5f) (10)

1 (5) 0531 **SOUTH WEST** 29 (B,D) R Hughes 9-9 — **F Marsh**
2 (10) 204 **AMERICAN PSYCHO** 19 A Watson 9-8 — **Doubtful**
3 (7) 4324 **VIKING BARBIE** 41 Ollie Sangster 9-5 — **D Muscutt**
4 (9) 0334 **WOLF'S GALLOP** 15 (BF) T Lacey 9-4 — **C Bishop**
5 (3) 065 **BEAUTIFUL EFFORT** 36 I Mohammed & J Santos 9-2 **B Sayette**
6 (8) 404 **SULTAN DARIUS** 21 (H) M Botti 9-1 — **D Keenan**
7 (6) 005 **STONEY WOOD** 21 M Bell 9-0 — **C Shepherd**
8 (1) 45514 **MISS MONEYPIT** 12 (D) B Millman 9-0 — **D Probert**
9 (2) 0060 **FROM ME TO YOU** 26 (B) R Hannon 9-0 — **J Leavy**
10 (4) 060 **SECRET RIVAL** 28 E Walker 8-10 — **G Downing**

9-4 South West, 4-1 Wolf's Gallop, 5-1 Viking Barbie, 8-1 Sultan Darius, 10-1 Stoney Wood, Secret Rival, From Me To You, 12-1 Beautiful Effort.

Windsor

Thunderer

5.36 Solar Invincible
6.11 Methgal
6.41 Colourband
7.11 Waterford Castle
7.41 King's Code
8.11 Mythological Star

Going: good to firm
Draw: 6f, low numbers best — **Sky Sports Racing**

5.36 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,397: 6f) (11)

1 (3) 15422 **SOLAR INVINCIBLE** 17 (P) R Teal 9-9 — **B Loughnane**
2 (1) -0432 **COURT ALERT** 22 (B) E J-Houghton 9-9 — **C Hutchinson**
3 (4) 56625 **GUERNSEY ANGEL** 17 (BF) P Evans 9-9 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
4 (5) 2-202 **PILGRIM'S PROGRESS** 10 R Hannon 9-8 — **P Dobbs**
5 (2) 4-500 **DARK ALLEY** 17 (P,D) W Greatrex 9-8 — **T Greatrex**
6 (6) 51116 **MAID IN DEVON** 19 (BF,D) B Millman 9-8 **Jack Doughty**
7 (11) 665 **DEADLINE** 30 W Greatrex 9-6 — **R Hornby**
8 (7) 15040 **TWO AND TWO** 43 (D) S Hodgson 9-6 — **A Rawlinson**
9 (9) -1660 **DOUBLE NAUGHTY** 26 (BF,D) J Tickle 9-5 — **Taylor Fisher**
10 (8) 20504 **KOFFEE AND KALE** 14 M Bell 9-4 — **S De Sousa**
11 (10) 60261 **MADMAN** 17 (CD) R Cook & J Bridger 9-3 — **David Egan**

7-2 Madman, 4-1 Solar Invincible, 6-1 Guernsey Angel, 13-2 Maid In Devon, 7-1 Court Alert, 10-1 Pilgrim's Progress, Deadline, 12-1 Koffee And Kale.

6.11 Handicap (£3,768: 6f) (12)

1 (11) 32426 **RYE** 69 (BF) A Carroll 4-9-9 — **Myla Coppins (5)**
2 (10) 00402 **METHGAL** 16 (B,T,BF) D Cunha 4-9-9 — **P Dobbs**
3 (7) 40012 **BEELZEBUB** 45 (BF,CD) A Carroll 6-9-8 — **B Loughnane**
4 (8) 53203 **LAHINA BAY** 10 (BF,CD) R Cook & J Bridger 6-9-8 — **R Clutterbuck**
5 (3) 00326 **THE FEMININE URGE** 9 (C,D) G Harris 4-9-8 **Ashley Lewis (3)**
6 (1) 12131 **LEGENDSOFTHELAND** 16 (D) A Wintle 4-9-7 **David Egan**
7 (5) -5564 **MAY ENCOUNTER** 19 (H) H Candy 4-9-6 — **N Currie**
8 (4) 406-5 **ONE FOR HARVEY** 21 C Hobson 4-9-4 — **J Gilligan**
9 (9) 503 **ELMFIELD** 13 G Scott 3-9-4 — **Liam Wright (5)**
10 (6) 46442 **BEACH PARTEE** 8 (V,D) S Dixon 3-9-3 — **C Howarth (3)**
11 (12) 04501 **RIANKA** 21 (T,D) Martin Dunne 3-9-2 — **S De Sousa**
12 (2) 0000 **RAGAIRE** 89 Ollie Sangster 3-8-6 — **Libby Swallow (7)**

4-1 Beelzebub, 5-1 Legendsoftheland, Methgal, 8-1 Beach Partee, Rye, Lahina Bay, Rianka, 10-1 May Encounter.

6.41 Handicap (£5,566: 1m) (8)

1 (7) 6510- **MIA SUNSHINE** 264 (W,D) M Bowen 4-10-3 **B Loughnane**
2 (4) 13000 **CLOUDS HILL** 34 (D) C Johnston 4-10-1 — **C Hutchinson**
3 (5) 05040 **GREAT CHIEFTAIN** 12 (B,D) Oliver Cole 5-9-13 **Kaiya Fraser**
4 (8) 50335 **KNIGHTS GOLD** 33 (P,D) T Ward 4-9-11 — **S De Sousa**
5 (3) -1642 **COLOURBAND** 17 (T,BF) S & E Crisford 3-9-8 — **H Davies**
6 (2) 23254 **SIGNCASTLE CITY** 35 (D) R Hannon 6-9-4 — **P Dobbs**
7 (6) -5343 **MAGICAL MERLOT** 47 (BF,D) E Dunlop 3-9-1 **David Egan**
8 (1) 33614 **TOO HOT TO TANGO** 14 (BF,CD) H Morrison 3-8-11 — **R Hornby**

11-4 Colourband, 9-2 Mia Sunshine, 11-2 Magical Merlot, 6-1 Too Hot To Tango, Knights Gold, 10-1 Clouds Hill, Signcastle City, Great Chieftain.

7.11 Maiden Stakes (£6,480: 1m 2f) (6)

1 (3) 44 **WINSTON'S OATH** 7 James Owen 4-10-1 — **P Bradley**
2 (4) 0-4 **SERGEI BREEZE** 24 Kathy Turner 3-9-7 **B Ffrench-Davis (5)**
3 (2) 56- **THATCHAM** 326 R Hannon 3-9-7 — **P Dobbs**
4 (1) 22023 **WATERFORD CASTLE** 13 (B) G Boughey 3-9-7 **B Loughnane**
5 (5) **PARTYING** K P De Foy 3-9-2 — **David Egan**
6 (6) 5 **SAX AVOIDANCE** 27 Charlie Pike 3-9-2 — **T Greatrex**

4-6 Partying, 11-8 Waterford Castle, 14-1 Thatcham, 50-1 Sergei Breeze, 66-1 Winston's Oath, Sax Avoidance.

7.41 Handicap (£9,631: 1m 2f) (8)

1 (4) -0300 **AULD TOON LOON** 33 (P,T,CD) T Dascombe 7-10-2 **D J Murphy (7)**
2 (1) 00510 **KING'S CODE** 16 (B,D) P Evans 6-10-2 — **J F Egan**
3 (2) 30410 **CITY OF POETS** 40 J Tate 4-9-13 — **R Hornby**
4 (7) 1022- **BOX TO BOX** 334 (V,BF,D) H Palmer 7-9-10 **L Catton (3)**
5 (5) 36001 **PARLANDO** 19 (P,CD) I Williams 7-9-7 — **R Kavanagh (3)**
6 (3) 22131 **A MAJOR PAYNE** 31 (P,CD) M Bell 5-9-7 — **B Loughnane**
7 (8) 22120 **LAW COURT** 14 R Hannon 3-9-0 — **Faleh Bughanaim**
8 (6) 40341 **BOLD IMPACT** 31 (C) B Millman 4-8-13 — **G Mangan**

11-4 A Major Payne, 4-1 Parlando, 5-1 Bold Impact, 7-1 Box To Box, 8-1 Auld Toon Loon, King's Code, 10-1 Law Court, City Of Poets.

8.11 Handicap (3-Y-O: £4,397: 1m 3f) (4)

1 (3) 01141 **ARAVALLI** 7 J Tickle 9-12(6ex) — **Taylor Fisher**
2 (1) 03311 **MYTHOLOGICAL STAR** 3 (C) D & C Kubler 9-12(6ex) — **B Loughnane**
3 (2) 03431 **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION** 31 (C) J Butler 9-7 — **S De Sousa**
4 (4) 04-33 **ROKER ROAR** 20 A Balding 9-4 — **C Hutchinson**

6-4 Mythological Star, 15-8 Aravalli, 3-1 Impossible Mission, 10-1 Roker Roar.

Yesterday's racing results

Beverley

Going: good to firm (good in places)

2.15 (5f) 1, **Lexington Boom** (Oliver Stammers, 3-1); 2, Mubehir (125-1); 3, Spectacular Diver (14-1). 10 ran. NR: Mugheer, Scottys Rocket. 17½l, ½l. Grant Tuer.
2.45 (7f 75yd) 1, **Empire Rising** (S H James, 9-2); 2, Black Fury (100-1); 3, Coco Nova (4-6). 12 ran. NR: Cowgirl. 27½l, 1¼l. Charlie Clover.
3.15 (7f 75yd) 1, **Sir David** (Alex Jary, 9-1); 2, Elettaria (10-1); 3, The New Bay Pearl (11-4). 13 ran. NR: Power Of Chora. nk, 1l. N Tinkler.
3.45 (7f 75yd) 1, **Glenfinnan** (D Tudhope, 11-2); 2, Alpha Capture (13-8); 3, Intervention (33-1). 10 ran. NR: Style Of Life. ¾l, 1¼l. M Dods.
4.15 (1m 1f 207yd) 1, **Ciao Capo** (O J Orr, 2-1 fav); 2, Bearwith (17-2); 3, Dr Rio (12-1). 8 ran. 1l, 2½l. R A Fahey.
4.45 (5f) 1, **Rumble Ruby** (Warren Fentiman, 16-1); 2, Straight Ahead (6-1); 3, Qila (9-2). 10 ran. NR: Dragon Spin. sh, 17½l. Lemos Souza.
Placepot: £76.00 Quadpot: £22.60

Ffos Las

Going: good

3.37 (6f) 1, **Eskimo Pie** (Daniel Muscutt, 4-9fav); 2, Mollstar (3-1); 3, Mystic Veil (13-2). 3 ran. NR: Dixie Blue, Livys Edge. 2½l, 2½l. Jane Chapple-Hyam.
4.07 (5f) 1, **Happier** (Jack Doughty, 9-2); 2, The Coffee Pod (11-10fav); 3, Little Jaybee (9-1). 8 ran. NR: River Edge. 1½l, 1¼l. M Keighley.
4.37 (7f 80y) 1, **Narrjoo** (Jack Callan, 11-10fav); 2, Engraved (11-2); 3, Drum Bay (11-8). 6 ran. NR: Isabella De Vega. ¾l, 3¼l. S & E Crisford.
5.10 (1m) 1, **Oviedo** (Millie Wonnacott, 13-2); 2, Ivat Ghia (5-1); 3, Angel's Call (7-1). 10 ran. 12l, ¾l. Alexandra Dunn.
5.40 (1m) 1, **The Stone Power** (Rhys Clutterbuck, 10-3); 2, Royal Bodyguard (3-1); 3, John Harrison (6-4fav). 5 ran. NR: Port Louis. 2¼l, ½l. R M Beckett.
6.10 (1m 3f 209y) 1, **Belle Of Kt** (Millie Wonnacott, 4-1); 2, A Daughters Love (7-4fav); 3, Noble Grace (11-2). 6 ran. ¾l, 4½l. J S Moore.
Placepot: £23.70 Quadpot: £14.60

Kempton Park

Going: standard/slow

5.30 (7f) 1, **Coaxed** (R Havlin, 9-2); 2, Miss Miniver (11-4); 3, Cullenagh Rainbow (80-1). 12 ran. nk, 2l. J & T Gosden.
6.00 (1m 3f 219yd) 1, **Arrivera** (D Egan, 10-1); 2, Ladykirk (7-2); 3, Manaar (1-3 fav). 5 ran. 1l, 1l. Tom Clover.
6.30 (7f) 1, **Percy's Lad** (Ebrahim Nader, 5-1); 2, Sea Founder (5-2 fav); 3, Peter The Wolf (16-1). 11 ran. sh, 1¼l. D & C Kubler.
7.00 (7f) 1, **Racingbreaks Ryder** (Jason Watson, 16-1); 2, Philanthropist (11-4 fav); 3, Kiniro (13-2). 11 ran. 1½l, nk. C Hills.
7.30 (1m) 1, **Warrior Mode** (Dylan Hogan, 5-4 fav); 2, Metallo (11-4); 3, Kindest Nation (22-1). 10 ran. 1½l, 2¼l. Sir Mark Prescott.
8.00 (1m) 1, **Rogue Allegiance** (Harry Davies, 9-2); 2, Final Night (2-1); 3, Sovereign View (3-1). 9 ran. NR: Gunfighter. nk, 1½l. James Owen.
8.30 (1m 3f 219yd) 1, **Kokbastau** (Cieren Fallon, 11-10 fav); 2, Bulletin (3-1); 3, Must Believe (50-1); 4, . 12 ran. 5l, ½l. R Varian.
9.00 (1m 3f 219yd) 1, **Crooked Path** (Cieren Fallon, 11-4); 2, Maestro Del Mar (3-1); 3, Star Time (15-2). 10 ran. NR: Semper Femina. hd, 3½l. James Owen.
Placepot: £112.30 Quadpot: £5.80

Salisbury

Going: good to firm (good in places)

2.30 (6f) 1, **Forbidden Fire** (Oisin Murphy, 5-2); 2, Ongombo (18-1); 3, Easy Answer (7-4). 8 ran. NR: Flick Of An Eye. 5½l, ns. A M Balding.
3.00 (6f) 1, **Supreme King** (Oisin Murphy, 4-1); 2, Dandana (18-1); 3, So Darn Hot (13-8 fav). 7 ran. 1¼l, nk. P D Evans.
3.30 (1m) 1, **Quest For Stars** (Connor Planas, 11-4); 2, Scommessa Sicura (8-11); 3, Rocket Boy (14-1). 6 ran. NR: Dandyman Dan, Rafe's da Man. nk, ½l. C Appleby.
4.00 (6f) 1, **Bold Shout** (H Crouch, 1-1 fav); 2, Just Dreaming (100-1); 3, Remi Mae (5-4). 7 ran. 27½l, 1l. C G Cox.
4.30 (1m 1f 201yd) 1, **On Message** (H Crouch, 14-1); 2, Miss Scott (13-8 fav); 3, Felicitas (13-8 fav). 7 ran. 1l, 3l. R M Beckett.
5.00 (1m 1f 201yd) 1, **Mythical Bird** (Rob Hornby, 7-1); 2, Almekarem (3-1); 3, Fox Avatar (7-2). 6 ran. NR: Miss Tonnerre. nk, 2l. H Morrison.
Placepot: £100.30. Quadpot: £25.00. Jackpot: £29,552.90.

Results

Football

Uefa Super Cup Paris Saint-Germain 2 Aston Villa 1 (Red Bull Arena, Salzburg).

Athletics

European Championships (Birmingham)
Men's 110m hurdles final: 1 J Joseph (Swit) 13.12sec; **2** J Kwaou-Mathey (Fr) 13.16sec; **3** J Szymanski (Pol) 13.26sec.
Men's 400m final: 1M Hudson-Smith (GB) 44.17sec; **2** M A Kounta (Fr) 44.40sec; **3** J Phijffers (Neth) 44.41sec.
Women's 400m hurdles final: 1 E Zapletalova (Slovak) 52.91sec; **2** E Newnham (GB) 53.33sec; **3** F Diallo (Port) 53.55sec.
Women's hammer final: 1 S Kosonen (Fin) 76.28m; **2** S Fantini (It) 74.35m; **3** B Llano (Nor) 72.88m.

Cricket

The Hundred
Birmingham Phoenix v MI London: Men
Edgbaston (Birmingham Phoenix won toss): MI London (4pts) win by 2 runs

MI London		(balls)
W G Jacks c Weatherley b Wood	11	(7)
J M Vince b Helm	22	(12)
†N Pooran c Owen b Thompson	36	(21)
*S M Curran c Ferreira b Ahmed	0	(4)
J J Roy c Weatherley b Ahmed	26	(21)
S R Butt c Thompson b Wood	17	(13)
O F M Sykes not out	23	(14)
T K Curran not out	17	(9)
Extras (w 4, nb 1)	5	
Total (6 wkts, 100 balls)	**157**	

T A Boult, R J Gleeson, N A Sowter did not bat.
Fall of wkts 1-12, 2-48, 3-48, 4-80, 5-110, 6-124.
Bowling Mahmood 15-0-34-0; Wood 20-0-28-2; Helm 20-0-46-1; Ahmed 15-1-7-2; Ferreira 15-0-18-0; Thompson 15-0-24-1.

Birmingham Phoenix		(balls)
†J M Clarke b Raza	1	(3)
M J Owen c Raza b Gleeson	18	(10)
J J Weatherley c Sowter b S Curran	42	(31)
L J Evans c Pooran b Gleeson	0	(1)
S R Dickson lbw b S Curran	23	(17)
*D Ferreira c Sykes b Boult	14	(15)
J A Thompson not out	23	(13)
R Ahmed run out (Roy)	23	(11)
Extras (nb 1, w 9, b 1)	11	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**155**	

C P Wood, S Mahmood, T G Helm did not bat.
Fall 1-2, 2-23, 3-23, 4-81, 5-103, 6-114, 7-155.
Bowling Raza 15-0-16-1; Boult 20-0-42-1; Gleeson 20-0-29-2; S Curran 20-0-37-2; Sowter 10-0-13-0; T Curran 15-0-17-0.

Women
Edgbaston (Birmingham Phoenix won toss): Birmingham Phoenix (4pts) win by 5 wickets

MI London		(balls)
H K Matthews c Perrin b Khan	21	(14)
†K M Chathli lbw b Filer	1	(5)
*H J Armitage c Capsey b Gray	31	(31)
A C Kerr c Perry b Brett	0	(1)
A Z Monaghan b Gray	12	(12)
C A Henry c Perry b King	42	(33)
N J Carey not out	8	(4)
Extras (lb 1, w 4)	5	
Total (6 wkts, 100 balls)	**120**	

K Moore, K L Gordon, T G Norris and D L Gregory did not bat.
Fall 1-15, 2-29, 3-29, 4-47, 5-103, 6-120.
Bowling Khan 10-0-12-1; Brett 20-0-16-1; Filer 20-1-28-1; King 20-0-25-1; Capsey 10-0-9-0; Gray 20-0-29-2.

Birmingham Phoenix		(balls)
D S T Perrin c Norris b Gordon	8	(6)
†J E M Spence b Norris	0	(3)
A R Capsey c sub b Gordon	2	(7)
*E A Perry not out	62	(39)
E L Lamb c Chathli b Kerr	1	(5)
F S Khan c Monaghan b Carey	36	(32)
A Dercksen not out	2	(3)
Extras (b 1, w 8, nb 1)	10	
Total (5 wkts, 94 balls)	**121**	

A M King, E Gray, L L Filer, P J Brett did not bat.
Fall1-3, 2-16, 3-45, 4-48, 5-114.
Bowling Norris 10-0-16-1; Carey 20-0-28-1; Gordon 20-1-20-2; Kerr 20-0-23-1; Gregory 10-0-17-0; Matthews 14-0-16-0.

Welsh Fire v London Spirit: Men
Sophia Gardens (Welsh Fire won toss): London Spirit (4pts) win by 6 runs

London Spirit		(balls)
L G Pretorius c Cox b Ferguson	6	(11)
†J M Bairstow c Cox b Woakes	34	(19)
*L S Livingstone c Salt b Jansen	4	(4)
D T Brevis c Ravindra b Ferguson	16	(17)
J M Coles c Kohler-Cadmore b Ravindra	29	(22)
J H A Moores c Short b Cook	11	(8)
D J Willey b Jansen	1	(3)
J Overton c Jansen b Woakes	21	(11)
A F Milne not out	4	(3)
M S Crane not out	2	(2)
Extras (lb 1, w 2)	3	
Total (8 wkts, 100 balls)	**131**	

H T Crocombe did not bat.
Fall 1-29, 2-34, 3-53, 4-80, 5-103, 6-103, 7-125, 8-126.
Bowling Woakes 20-0-18-2; Cook 20-0-35-1; Jansen 20-0-16-2; Ferguson 20-0-31-2; Ravindra 20-0-30-1.

Welsh Fire		(balls)
*†P D Salt c Pretorius b Crocombe	26	(21)
M W Short b Willey	0	(3)
J E Root c Willey b Coles	31	(31)
J M Cox c Overton b Milne	44	(28)
R Ravindra c and b Willey	9	(10)
T Kohler-Cadmore c Livingstone b Milne	0	(1)
M Jansen c Overton b Willey	1	(4)
C R Woakes not out	7	(2)
Extras (lb 5, w 2)	7	
Total (7 wkts, 100 balls)	**125**	

J Clark, L H Ferguson and S J Cook did not bat.
Fall 1-1, 2-43, 3-90, 4-117, 5-117, 6-118, 7-125.
Bowling Willey 20-0-20-3; Milne 20-0-23-2; Crocombe 20-0-26-1; Overton 20-0-21-0; Coles 15-0-21-1; Crane 5-0-9-0.

Women
Sophia Gardens (London Spirit won toss): Welsh Fire (4pts) win by 15 runs

Welsh Fire		(balls)
G A Voll c Pavely b Rainey	17	(9)
†S J Bryce b de Klerk	17	(19)
F G Kemp b Harris	26	(14)
*G L Wareham c Pavely b Dean	50	(34)
O P Prendergast c Harris b Dean	12	(14)
H L Graham c Dean b Harris	0	(2)
E L Arlott c George b Harris	2	(4)
N F Holland not out	1	(2)
A E M Norgrove not out	4	(2)
Extras (lb 2, w 7)	9	
Total (7 wkts,100 balls)	**138**	

S A E Smale and G E A Potts did not bat.
Fall 1-18, 2-55, 3-74, 4-105, 5-106, 6-114, 7-132.
Bowling George 15-0-36-0; Rainey 15-0-26-1; Dean 20-0-18-2; Harris 15-0-15-3; De Klerk 20-0-28-1; Pavely 15-0-13-0.

London Spirit		(balls)
G M Harris c Prendergast b Potts	1	(4)
†A E Jones c Wareham b Potts	10	(7)
M Kelly c Bryce b Potts	0	(1)
C R Pavely c Holland b Graham	18	(13)
*C E Dean c Norgrove b Prendergast	27	(20)
N de Klerk c Smale b Prendergast	11	(13)
K L George c Voll b Smale	3	(6)
D J S Dottin lbw b Smale	15	(13)
S A Smale c Arlott b Wareham	17	(14)
L F Higham not out	8	(5)
H Rainey c and b Graham	3	(3)
Extras (b 8, lb 1, w 1)	10	
Total (99 balls)	**123**	

Fall 1-2, 2-2, 3-18, 4-44, 5-72, 6-75, 7-81, 8-107, 9-119.
Bowling Potts 20-0-23-3; Prendergast 20-0-25-2; Graham 19-0-16-2; Smale 20-0-21-2; Wareham 20-0-29-1.

Men	**P**	**W**	**L**	**T**	**NR**	**Pts**	**NRR**
Trent Rockets (F)	8	6	2	0	0	**24**	0.74
Manchester SG (q)	8	5	3	0	0	**20**	0.79
SunRisers Leeds (q)	8	5	3	0	0	**20**	0.60
MI London	8	5	3	0	0	**20**	0.24
Welsh Fire	8	4	4	0	0	**16**	-0.90
Southern Brave	8	3	5	0	0	**12**	-0.02
London Spirit	8	3	5	0	0	**12**	-0.10
B'ham Phoenix	8	1	7	0	0	**4**	-1.32

Women	**P**	**W**	**L**	**T**	**NR**	**Pts**	**NRR**
Trent Rockets (F)	8	7	1	0	0	**28**	1.39
SunRisers Leeds (q)	8	5	3	0	0	**20**	1.03
Southern Brave (q)	8	5	3	0	0	**20**	0.11
Manchester SG	8	4	3	0	1	**18**	0.34
Welsh Fire	8	4	4	0	0	**16**	0.13
London Spirit	8	2	5	1	0	**10**	-0.36
B'ham Phoenix	8	2	5	0	1	**10**	-1.60
MI London	8	1	6	1	0	**6**	-1.17

Tennis

National Bank Open
Montreal: Men's quarter-finals L Tien (US) bt D Merida (Sp) 6-3, 6-2; (5) B Shelton (US) bt (13) J Mensik (Cz) 6-3, 6-1. **Toronto: Women's quarter-finals** (4) C Gauff (US) bt (12) B Bencic (Swit) w/o; (2) E Rybakina (Kaz) bt (11) N Osaka (Japan) 4-6, 7-6 (7-5), 6-4.

Fixtures

Football

Europa League third qualifying round second leg Egnatia (1) v Shelbourne (3) (8.0); Hearts (1) v Benfica (6) (7.45); Rangers (1) v Jagiellonia Bialystok (2) (7.30).
Conference League third qualifying round second leg Midtjylland (2) v Bohemians (0) (6.0), Motherwell (1) v HJK (1) (7.30), Shelbourne (1) v Ajax (3) (7.45); Shkendija (1) v Hibernian (2) (7.0).

Athletics

Birmingham European Championships.

Rugby league

Super League (8.0): Hull KR v Catalans, Leeds v Leigh, Warrington v York.

Sport Rugby's Greatest Rivalry

When Springboks caused New Zealand's worst unrest

In second of the series, **Elgan Alderman** looks at anti-apartheid demonstrations on the 1981 tour

As a prop in the amateur era, Gary Knight was no stranger to a rough time. The Manawatu dairy farmer and Commonwealth Games wrestler, eye-gouged on his All Blacks debut, was knocked down by a flour bomb at Eden Park, against the Springboks, in 1981. "I guess that would be a tremendous thump," Keith Quinn said on commentary.

The third Test, the final match of a tour provoking the deepest unrest in New Zealand history, took place on September 12 of that year. Streaks of white coloured the middle of the field. Marx Jones and Grant Cole had piloted a Cessna aeroplane and flew over the stadium in Auckland repeatedly, over protagonists who were acting in — so they and thousands of others believed — a scandalous enterprise that gave succour to a racist, apartheid regime. It was the final instalment of the barbed-wire tour, and 20 years later a documentary title described it as: *1981: A Country at War*.

The All Black and Springbok rivalry between 1921 and 1976 was an unofficial world championship of rugby with a sideshow in politics, fuelled by the omission of Maori players and the Halt All Racist Tours movement. Visits by South Africa were no longer peaceful and the crescendo reached fortissimo in 1981 with the Springboks' eight-week tour of New Zealand. The accepted figure is that more than 150,000 people took part in more than 200 demonstrations, leading to injuries and arrests in large numbers, reflecting an issue that split the country and appeared ruinous to the fabric of a placid nation.

The All Blacks were not rugby outliers in recognising South Africa, though the Gleneagles Agreement discouraged Commonwealth countries from sporting contact. In 1980, the Springboks hosted a South American XV twice, either side of a British & Irish Lions tour, rounded off the year by playing France at Loftus Versfeld, and had a two-match series at home to Ireland to kick off 1981. Despite being cast as pariahs they were busier than the All Blacks, who had only four Tests in 1980, all of them overseas.

The tenth bilateral tour between the world's leading rugby nations was organised for 1981. Eight years earlier the prime minister, Norman Kirk, had prevented the Springboks from coming to New Zealand, fearing civil unrest. Robert Muldoon, the premier in 1981, hinted at discouragement but no further, saying he would not bow to overseas pressure in a democracy. Many of those in favour of the tour reckoned sport and politics should not mix, but there was a general election later that year. Muldoon lost the popular vote but retained a majority (just).

Graham Mourie, the All Blacks flanker, decided not to take part in the series. Rob Louw, the South African flanker, was the room-mate — and future godfather to his child — of Errol Tobias, the first black Springbok and a tour participant. Tobias later said the Springboks shouldn't have gone, but the reaction showed what the world thought of South Africa's government. "As rugby players, our whole dream was just to go across and play against the All Blacks, and most of them were the same," Louw told *The Ruck*, the podcast from The Times and The Sunday Times. "It wasn't easy. There was a lot of pressure on us."

Tobias, the first black Springbok, was on the tour and won six caps from 1981-84

South Africa v New Zealand

Tour results
Stormers **21** New Zealand **38**
Sharks **0** New Zealand **54**

Fixtures
Bulls v New Zealand Saturday, Pretoria
First Test August 22, Johannesburg
Lions v New Zealand August 25, Johannesburg
Second Test August 29, Cape Town
Third Test September 5, Johannesburg
Fourth Test September 12, Baltimore, US

Anger mobilised before the Springboks' arrival through protests and strikes, and the team could not be flown via Sydney because of trade union opposition. On July 22, for the opening game against Poverty Bay in Gisborne, protesters on both sides faced each other. Anti-tourists, who had organised a "day of shame" march, tried to invade the pitch (there had already been arrests for targeting the hotel). The game went ahead and the Springboks won 24-6. Invasions, projectiles and the threat of stolen aircraft flying over the ground succeeded in forcing the cancellation of the game against Waikato in Hamilton three days later.

On the day of the third game, against Taranaki, Muldoon attended the wedding of Charles and Diana in London. Foreign observers were aware of the strife on the other side of the world. "Anarchy reigns in New Zealand" and "New Zealand lacerates itself" were headlines in The Times, and the matter was discussed in the House of Commons.

In New Zealand, protest and violence remained the undercurrent and overcurrent of the tour, such as the battle of Molesworth Street in Wellington, where up to 2,000 protesters were met with police batons. There was the familiar divide: those supporting the demonstration saw fascism in the authorities, whereas a group of police wives spoke out against the portrayal of their husbands in the news. Leading figures on the pro and anti-tour sides were being targeted. For those like John Minto, the national organiser for Halt All Racist Tours, it wasn't just about protesting against racism in South Africa, but discrimination against Maori in New Zealand.

The Springboks continued to win, beating Manawatu, Wanganui, Southland and Otago before the first Test. The grandstand at Lancaster Park was aflame two days before the game and in The Times, David Elias described how the tourists were "almost smuggled into Christchurch". Despite thousands of protesters around the venue, the game took place and New Zealand won 14-9.

The next midweek fixture, three days later against South Canterbury, was cancelled because of security concerns, leaving the Springboks rested for an 83-0 stuffing of Nelson Bays. Next up, in the final warm-up for the second Test, was a midweek encounter with New Zealand Maori in Napier. The Maori led 12-0 in the mud and puddles of McLean Park before a late drop-goal secured a draw, although there was considerable doubt as to whether Colin Beck's effort went between the posts. It didn't look like it did.

On to the second Test in Wellington, where Stu Wilson experienced how the tour could divide loyalties. Wilson's wife was among the protest lines, along with other members of his family, whereas Wilson was in the All Blacks team. "We had a load of beers afterwards and he said his whole family were demonstrating against him, but he wanted to play against South Africa," Louw told *The Ruck*.

The Springboks won 24-12 and then beat Bay of Plenty, Auckland and North Auckland, leaving the series decider against the All Blacks. Clashes on the day of the third Test were among the most violent of the tour. With a security perimeter around the ground, the game went ahead beneath the regular crossings by the aircraft. "In the first half we basically played looking at the plane," Louw said. Ray Mordt scored a hat-trick for the Springboks, who stayed overnight at the ground, sleeping on hard floors, and the score was 22-22 as full-time neared. Clive Norling, the Welsh referee, awarded the All Blacks a penalty, which Allan Hewson kicked. The All Blacks had won the series 2-1.

This is how Michael Brunson summarised the scenes in The Times two months later: "To describe New Zealanders in normal times as placid may be an understatement. Most Australians, for example, seem always to have preferred the word 'dull'. This year has not been normal. New Zealand's sleepy image has been shattered by the violence of the argument over the Springboks' tour."

The Springboks weren't done. They had one last show of disquiet in the United States, where police were injured at JFK airport when demonstrators tried to stop a plane from taking off, erroneously believing Springboks were on it. The three-match leg in Wisconsin and New York took place in near secrecy to avoid protests.

Why did they bother? Perhaps the Springboks sensed their days of international rugby were numbered. For the next 11 years they didn't face the All Blacks, opposing only a South American XV, England and a World XV. Well, there was one team strikingly similar to the All Blacks. Though a 1985 tour was cancelled, there was a rebel exception in 1986, which many do not talk about to this day.

Ruck podcast special

The Ruck

We track the 105-year rivalry via the voices of legendary players from both sides. Episodes will be available from Monday, in the build-up to the first Test between the Springboks and All Blacks at Ellis Park on Saturday, August 22.
thetimes.com/podcasts/the-ruck

A Cessna dive bombs the third Test

COLORSPORT/SHUTTERSTOCK; ASSOCIATED PRESS; AP PHOTO/NEW ZEALAND HERALD

and, inset, in other runs flour bombs were dropped from the plane. Left, supporters drag away a demonstrator in Hamilton

Mitchell questions trial of smaller balls

Elgan Alderman

John Mitchell fears the use of a smaller ball could lead to an increase in kicking in women's rugby and erode a key point of difference to the men's game.

World Rugby has extended the trial use of size 4.5 balls, which are about 3 per cent smaller than the size 5 but with the same weight, from elite sevens to the WXV Global Series.

As part of the reformatted schedule, England will host Australia, Canada and New Zealand on successive weekends from September 12 before travelling to North America to face Canada twice and the United States once from October 16.

Zoe Harrison, the England fly half, called the trial "the worst decision someone has ever made" when she found out about it in May. Harrison, who has used a size 5 ball since she was 14, succeeded with 29 of her 31 place-kicks during this year's Six Nations. The Red Roses, after winning the 2025 World Cup, extended their unbeaten run to 38 Tests with a grand slam.

Mitchell said England's kickers had been given the smaller ball during the off-season to practise, and believes that familiarity with it will simply come down to coaching. "Now we're just training with it, it's just become part of our training programme," the England head coach said. "We don't talk about it. It's not something that's even obvious really, to be fair. I'm sure each individual will have different feelings as they're going through the adaptation of playing with it."

Part of the rationale is to make off-loading easier, mirroring the use of smaller balls in basketball and cricket, because women on average have smaller hands. Given that England are the world's dominant side, Mitchell said it could help other teams narrow the gap with their skills.

"It's too early for me to say that it's going to help our offloading game, or it's going to help with the pass," he said. "I'm sure there's consequences as well. There might be more contestable kicking, which is probably something we want to keep away from our game, because it's a point of difference between our game and the men's game.

"Will passes drop away? Will kicks go as far? All those things need to be answered. The sample at the moment is too small. Once we get into the first three Test matches at home, a lot of your curiosity will be answered."

Harrison said the trial was "the worst decision ever"

The New Zealand-born Mitchell became a British citizen in the off-season, belting out the national anthem during his interview like he has done many times in three stints as an RFU employee. He likened the three Tests against Canada, who lost last year's World Cup final to England, to the forthcoming men's series between the All Blacks and Springboks.

"There's no tournament to win [this autumn], so we can be very patient around how we go about things," Mitchell said. "Ultimately it's like you're auditioning for Australia in 2029 because geographically we're going to be travelling some distance [in WXV]."

Coles and Opoku-Fordjour receive England contracts

CONTINUED FROM BACK

Saints forward, became established in the team over the past year. He played in all 12 England Tests and started at lock in the July Nations Championship matches against South Africa, Fiji and Argentina.

Since the last-gasp loss to France at the end of the Six Nations, Borthwick has preferred Ollie Chessum at blindside flanker in a pack with more lineout options. The promotion of Coles, who formed a complementary second-row combination with George Martin in July, reflects this selection pivot.

Opoku-Fordjour, 22, has won only eight caps to date, four of those during the past season, but is a valuable asset at prop as he can play both on the loose-head and tight-head side of the scrum. Borthwick is keen to select versatile players for his World Cup squad next year, so Opoku-Fordjour fits that bill.

He started for England in the uncapped international against France in June at loose-head prop, yet is unlikely to see too much game time in that position for his club over the coming domestic campaign. Sale Sharks are well stocked at loose-head with new signing Nicky Smith, England international Bevan Rodd, and the experienced Simon McIntyre. Ellis Genge, Joe Heyes, Fin Baxter, Will Stuart and Opoku-Fordjour are now the five contracted England props. Baxter and Stuart are retained despite both being injured throughout 2026.

Willis, who has left England and Saracens to join the Champions Cup holders Bordeaux Bègles, has dropped out having not played a single Test while on a central deal. He was paid in full, since he joined the list last August, but as he announced his departure to France at the start of the last domestic season, he was discarded from all England squads.

Roebuck lost his place in the team during this year's Six Nations, and now must fight his way back into contention. He is behind Tommy Freeman and Immanuel Feyi-Waboso, the two contracted wingers, and recently has been overlooked in match-day squads for Cadan Murley and Noah Caluori. Neither of the latter two wings has been awarded contracts, and nor has Benhard Janse van Rensburg.

Instead, Borthwick has chosen to reward Atkinson, and retain Henry Slade, as two out-and-out centres, but he has dropped Lawrence. Daly, the 33-year-old utility back, is another casualty.

Atkinson's inclusion is interesting as the appearance of Janse van Rensburg, 29, has made his place in the team uncertain. Atkinson has started the past three Tests at No 12 but Borthwick is keen to see more of Janse van Rensburg, the Bristol centre, in his midfield.

Van Poortvliet confirms his status as England's second scrum half, behind Alex Mitchell. Ben Spencer and Archie McParland have not been given deals.

By picking 25 players to receive RFU deals, Borthwick is in effect revealing his thoughts for next year's World Cup. For the tournament in Australia he will select 33 players, so this group will form the basis of his squad, injury and form permitting.

Now make me mayor, roars Hudson-Smith after home win

ADAM VAUGHAN/EPA

Hudson-Smith thrills the Birmingham crowd with front-running charge for gold

Matt Lawton
Chief Sports Correspondent, Birmingham

When measuring the burden of pressure and expectation on an international athlete, perhaps try walking a quarter-mile in the spiked shoes of Matthew Hudson-Smith.

Two months before these European Championships, the organisers decided to name a stand here in Birmingham in his honour. They invited the US-based 31-year-old back to his home track, and unveiled the temporary extension to the north end of the Alexander Stadium with a giant banner in his name.

So no pressure, then, on the local hero last night; a Birchfield Harrier, the fifth fastest 400m runner in history and twice previously a winner of individual European gold, expected to run past his own stand and deliver a third sprint title in as many evenings for a British team leading the medal table.

It was not as easy as the form guide suggested it would be. The decision to ease down in his semi-final, and concede victory to the Dutch athlete Jonas Phijffers, left Hudson-Smith in lane nine for this contest. But the Olympic and world silver medallist executed his race in a manner that meant he never saw his opponents, unless, that is, he sneaked a quick glance up at one of the giant screens and witnessed them struggling in futile pursuit.

Hudson-Smith attacked the race pretty much as he always does, pushing hard in the drive phase and into the back straight, before employing that huge, loping stride to carry him around the top bend.

Coming off the curve, he must have been three or four metres clear and, while the athletes inside him did slowly begin to close, he was still more than two tenths of a second ahead when he crossed for victory, clocking an impressive 44.17sec.

On the public address system, Katharine Merry, the stadium commentator, president of Hudson-Smith's club and a former Olympic 400m medallist, was unashamedly patriotic. "The Wolverhampton-born Birchfield Harrier delivers," she declared. "No one was denying him in his own back yard."

After posing for photographs in front of his stand, Hudson-Smith echoed the sentiment. "No one was catching me tonight," he said. "Honestly it doesn't just take a village – it takes a whole city, so thank you Wolverhampton and thank you Birmingham." He then declared his ambition to one day be mayor of the second city.

"I cannot describe what this means to me," he said, before having a little dig at the BBC. "I was watching a BBC newscast. You guys need to come with the facts, man. Saying I was injured and everything.

"The whole point of rounds is to survive and advance. I tried to conserve energy. Me and my coach were laughing all the way around. I knew I was the best in the world. I knew that. On paper, I was a second faster than these guys. My coach said, 'Once you seal the deal, make sure you do it. This is your home. Defend it.'

"I knew it would take one hell of an effort to get past me. Every time someone beats me, I kind of end their career. I knew that for them to beat me, they would have to have a supernatural moment. Nobody is going to beat me on this track. This is my home. I have been here since I was nine. I know this track like the back of my hand. I have got my stand. Now I will go for mayor of Birmingham and Wolverhampton."

It was yet another successful night for Britain with Emily Newnham snatching silver in the women's 400m hurdles in a fine personal best of 53.33sec.

But with a partial eclipse of the sun came an athlete who eclipsed everyone. This was the 14th time a British male athlete had won the European 400m title, dating back to Godfrey Brown in 1938, but only Hudson-Smith has three golds, with eight European medals in total. It made the fact his stand was largely empty all the more disappointing, and yet another source of embarrassment for the organisers.

Some have blamed ticket prices but when it cost as little as £26 for a seat in that particular area for this session – and half that for children – the argument is hard to sustain.

Senior British athletics figures are bruised by the attendance figures for the first three nights, even if they now point to the fact that 80 per cent of the tickets – totalling some 200,000 – have now been sold for the 13 sessions. They also anticipate full houses for later in the week.

Maybe the prices in some areas were pitched a little high. They are as much as £150, while the most expensive ticket in Rome two years ago was more like £80, with some tickets available for £20 for the finals in the evenings.

But there are plenty of cheaper tickets here and many of those sections have not sold well.

The organisers are scratching their heads a little, when last month's London Diamond League was a 60,000 sell-out and the Italian hosts of two years ago had about 40,000 fans for every session at the Stadio Olimpico.

Accessibility could be an issue, and not just by road and rail. International flights into Birmingham are perhaps more limited compared to other major airports, while the city itself could be a further factor. Brummies might love the Bullring but it is probably safe to assume that international fans would find a visit to the Colosseum or a stroll down Via Veneto more appealing.

It is a shame, given how exciting the competition has been. "Naturally, we would love to see a full stadium for every session, because nothing compares with the energy of a packed Alexander Stadium and the support it gives to the athletes," said a spokesman for European Athletics. "But we are very pleased that demand for tickets to the second half of the championships is strong, and we want to encourage people to come and experience this incredible event for themselves."

The next two nights should certainly deliver too. The women's 800m final tomorrow has long been regarded as the race of the championships; a duel between Keely Hodgkinson and the tall Swiss, Audrey Werro, who beat her in Stockholm in June.

But the women's 200m tonight promises to be every bit as exciting. Amy Hunt is chasing a second individual gold after her stunning display over 100m on Monday and she was impressive in winning her semi-final in 22.37sec when she came off the gas some 30m from the line. In Dina Asher-Smith, the 2019 world champion, she has some serious competition. Asher-Smith also won her semi-final, again with ease. It promises to be some contest.

British 400m winners

Matthew Hudson-Smith 2022, 2024 and 2026
Martyn Rooney 2014 and 2016
Iwan Thomas 1998
Du'aine Ladejo 1994
Roger Black 1986 and 1990
David Jenkins 1971
Robbie Brightwell 1962
John Wrighton 1958
Derek Pugh 1950
Godfrey Brown 1938

Evans storms to European gold, with help from Ramsay-Peaty

Swimming
Craig Lord Paris

Great Britain found its female Peaty in Paris yesterday night when Angharad Evans stormed to the first European women's 100m breaststroke title in British history.

Continental crowns in the two-length race have been ten a penny among our men. Britain are top of the all-time leaderboard with seven titles; Olympic champions Adrian Moorhouse (three golds) and Adam Ramsay-Peaty (four) are the biggest medal haulers Europe has known. There have been a decent number of silvers and bronzes for the women down the years but never gold. Until now. Evans has broken the duck, and brought real optimism for the Olympics in LA in 2028.

The 23-year-old from Stirling, Scotland, turned heads as she set a championship record in all three rounds, claiming gold in a British record of 1min 04.87sec. The Commonwealth champion from two weeks ago in Glasgow now has the seven fastest times in the world this year.

In Glasgow, victories in the 100m and 200m came the hard way, the expectation of a home crown rattling her nerves and keeping her from her best times. The lesson was "so important ... I now knew that I could be very nervous but still perform and win."

Buoyed by "The Britain Bounce", as the team here are calling their rise from a Commonwealth Games dominated by Australians, Evans delivered precisely what her coach, Ben Higson, at the Stirling Performance Centre had asked for.

"Ben tells me three things before every race: hit my line, stay over [control] my stroke, and dominate," says Evans with a chuckle.

She followed the instruction perfectly. Fourth at the turn, she drew level with Mona McSharry, Ireland's Olympic bronze medalist in Paris two years ago, with 25 metres to go, and then surged with such confidence that neither McSharry nor the rest could respond. It was silver for McSharry, 0.54sec back, and bronze for the Italian world 50m champion Benedetta Pilato, a distant 1.02sec behind Evans.

She will now race the world record-holder, Evgeniia Chikunova, in the rounds of the 200m today, before the final tomorrow.

Evans set a new British record on her way to taking 100m breaststroke gold

So, were we looking at the female Peaty, or simply extraordinary Evans?

A bit of both, the champion said: "People compare me to Adam Peaty, and it's such an honour. He's someone that I looked up to all of my younger swimming years, but also I do want to make a name for myself. I guess I have a completely different story to him."

Evans went to college in the US in search of progress in the swimming lion's den, but she said it didn't suit her. She almost quit, before she returned to the UK and opted for Stirling. Although her mum is American and her dad is Welsh, she chose to race for Scotland to pay Stirling back "for all they've done for me".

"I went over to the States and was taking time out of the water at a time when Adam [Peaty] was breaking world records," she recalls.

"So if you look at the two journeys, yes, we swim the same stroke but in completely different ways, and we've been through completely different things. He's had a lot of downs, but a lot of ups. I had very different hills than him and I think it's just beautiful that we are top in the nation but have come from such different backgrounds."

She then revealed that Ramsay-Peaty had helped her overcome the nerves that had held her back before: "He said to me, he's always there for me to lean on with nerves and navigate that journey. Now I'm in the higher end of the sport as opposed to a few years ago when I was just at the first stage. It's very comforting to have someone as experienced as him behind me."

Similar support, from coaches and senior team-mates, is being given to Amalie Smith, the 16-year-old Kent schoolgirl who claimed silver and bronze medals on medley for England in Glasgow two weeks ago, a fortnight after gold at the European Junior Championships in Munich.

On her European senior debut in Paris, with the rush of Evans's gold in the air, Smith raced to silver in the 400m medley. Trailing the young Smith into the last turn of the eight-length, all-strokes event, Ellen Walshe, an experienced 23-year-old Olympic finalist, put in a huge final turn and emerged ahead of her British opponent.

"I'm so happy with my race, my time, and the whole event," said Smith, who is coached by Karen Bradbury at Monson SC in Kent. "The crowd is just mental! I'm learning with every passing race."

Britain's growing female force in the pool now have three golds and a silver after three days of racing in Paris.

United a natural fit for me, says Tielemans

Paul Hirst, Dublin

At Carton House, the five-star hotel in Co Kildare once frequented by Queen Victoria, Youri Tielemans explained what Manchester United means to him.

Decked out in a red tracksuit and sporting a silver wristwatch, he spoke on Tuesday about the "relentlessness" of the club and their "high demands". "It's a big institution," he said.

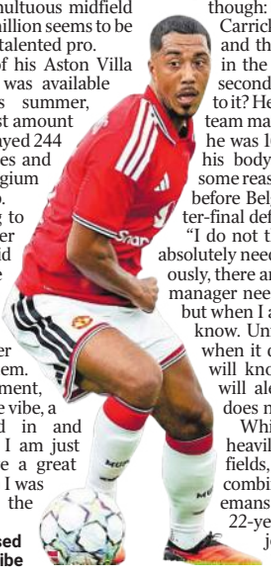
Training may have been finished for the day, the third day of United's pre-season training camp, but the 29-year-old midfielder's afternoon was not over — after his chat with the national press, the Belgian was interviewed by Rio Ferdinand for his podcast.

All the time he was being shadowed by an Amazon cameraman and three minders, who asked those present to sign a form giving their consent to feature in their forthcoming documentary.

United have not revealed publicly how much they will earn from the documentary, but well-placed sources put the figure at about £20 million, which, give or take, buys you half a Tielemans in today's tumultuous midfield market, where £100 million seems to be the benchmark for a talented pro.

Under the terms of his Aston Villa contract, Tielemans was available for £35 million this summer, which seems a modest amount for a man who has played 244 Premier League games and earned his 90th Belgium cap at the World Cup.

"I wasn't expecting to move this summer because at Villa we did amazing things, like winning the Europa League, but there are still clubs above Villa, and Manchester United is one of them. Especially at this moment, there is a very positive vibe, a very positive mood in and around the club. So I am just hopeful we can have a great story together. When I was younger, watching the Premier League games, Man United was always on top. There was always that mentality of winning games, and that is what we are trying to bring back to the club."



Tielemans is impressed by United's positive vibe

That Tielemans's journey with United will begin this season reflects badly on those in previous regimes who turned down the chance to sign the Belgian twice before, in 2019 and 2022.

"There has been two times that I spoke with the club, but it did not achieve anything. I was very calm about it," he says. "I just keep working, keep doing my thing on the pitch and then it happened."

His name can be added to a long list of players who joined United in the post-Alex Ferguson era five years too late, such as Edinson Cavani, Casemiro, Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Radamel Falcao, Christian Eriksen and Raphaël Varane.

That said, Tielemans's powers are not on the decline yet. Despite calf and ankle injuries last season, he played a key role in Villa's successful Europa League campaign. There are two obvious questions that need to be addressed, though: first, what does Michael Carrick want from Tielemans and the rest of his midfielders in the post-Casemiro era, and second, is Tielemans's body up to it? He has played 30-plus first-team matches every season since he was 16 and in his own words, his body "just switched off for some reason" during the warm-up before Belgium's World Cup quarter-final defeat by Spain.

"I do not think I am a player that absolutely needs a rest," he said. "Obviously, there are a lot of games and the manager needs to manage the team, but when I am good, I am good, you know. Unfortunately, my body is, when it does not go well, then I will know straight away and I will alert the manager, but it does not happen often."

While their rivals have spent heavily to reinforce their midfields, United have spent only a combined £85 million on Tielemans and Andrey Santos, the 22-year-old Brazilian, who joined from Chelsea. Whether that is a sign of over-caution or sensible activity remains to be seen, but United do look a little light in that part of the pitch, unless Carrick is convinced Mason Mount can play in a double pivot, as he has been doing alongside Santos in pre-season.

Kobbie Mainoo and Tielemans are the other two midfielders available, although there are high hopes for Darren Fletcher's twin boys, Jack and Tyler. All four seniors are technical players, rather than physically imposing midfielders who break up play, which suggests that Carrick wants his players to keep the ball better and move it forward more quickly and efficiently. There were times last season when giddiness got the better of United in transition. They lacked a technically skilled player with a calm head, and that is where Tielemans's experience should come in handy, playing alongside a deeper-lying sitter in the double pivot.

"I feel like I am best in the role of linking defence to attack, but if I need to stay more in front of the defence, or if I need to play ten and attack with more freedom, then I can do it easily," Tielemans said. "I just try and play forward as much as I can, either to Bruno [Fernandes] or the front line, he is a guy who can find space easily. It's been really natural playing with him so far."

Carrick clearly wants a lot from Tielemans judging by his conversations with the player just before he signed.

"He wants me to bring the best out of my qualities and he wants me to be free on the pitch, to try and organise the team as best as possible," he added.

"Obviously, he has got his principles. He wants to have the ball, he wants to press in certain ways. It might be different than what I have been used to before, but it is logical. It is just smelling football, and that is what I have been doing from when I was young. You can add your offensive qualities, especially in the last third, without overcommitting and keeping the defensive line in place, then we can do good things."

Barcelona told to pay £70m for City's Rodri

Simon Mullock, Paul Hirst

Manchester City have told Barcelona they must come up with £70 million to sign Rodri after rejecting a second bid for Spain's World Cup-winning captain.

The La Liga champions have been informed that a second offer of £51.3million, plus £5 million in add-ons, was unacceptable. Barcelona's opening bid was £38.5million.

City have now set a price and it remains to be seen whether Barcelona return to the negotiating table or wait to see how Rodri's situation develops when he returns to Manchester for pre-season training tomorrow.

City are interested in the Chelsea midfielder Enzo Fernández as a direct replacement for the 2024 Ballon d'Or winner but are aware the London club value the Argentinian at £120million.

After spending a club record £116 million to bring in Elliot Anderson from Nottingham Forest, as well as lining up an £85 million deal to sign the Lille and Morocco teenager Ayyoub Bouaddi, they are reluctant to lose one of their most influential players without securing the price they want.

Galatasaray make £38m bid for Martinelli

Gary Jacob

Arsenal have received a £38 million bid for Gabriel Martinelli from Galatasaray but it is not clear whether the winger wants to move to Turkey.

The 25-year-old is considered surplus to requirements at the Emirates this season, with the manager, Mikel Arteta, looking to bring in a left winger.

Martinelli has one year left on his contract, which is worth about £180,000 a week, but the Premier League champions have the option to extend it by one season, which would protect his value given it would prevent him from leaving on a free transfer next summer.

Martinelli, who played for Brazil at this summer's World Cup, joined Arsenal in 2019 for £6million from the Brazilian side Ituano. He has featured 191 times, scoring 41 goals. Last season he played 30 Premier League matches but scored only one goal.

Djed Spence is close to leaving Tottenham Hotspur for Inter Milan for up to £30million. The Italian champions are in talks to pay about £25.6million, plus £4.3million in add-ons, and a 10 per cent sell-on clause.

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Paris Saint-Germain's quality tells as Kvaratskhelia, right, gives the European champions the lead. But the 17-year-old Madjo, left, restores hope for Aston Villa with a great strike on the stroke of half-time. Above: Doué seals victory with a stunning goal that was initially flagged for offside. Below: Emery has plenty to look forward to for his much-changed side

Beaten but signs are positive

Charlotte Duncker
Salzburg

Paris Saint-Germain *Kvaratskhelia 20, Doué 61*	**2**
Aston Villa *Madjo 45*	**1**

Paris Saint-Germain are Super Cup winners once more, but Unai Emery can head back to Birmingham with something that could mean more than a piece of pre-season silverware: optimism for the new campaign.

Villa came to Austria as the underdogs, with just five of those who started that Europa League final back in May in the starting XI. They lost thanks to two outstanding goals from Khvicha Kvaratskhelia and Désiré Doué, but still they fought as they looked to match the level of the best team in Europe.

This was a PSG side who were just two games into their pre-season so were not at their very best, but their star names still graced the pitch. While it was the familiar characters in blue and red who led them to victory, it was time for Villa's new boys to make a name for themselves.

Brian Madjo became the youngest player to score in the competition when he finished with a lovely volley to level things up for Villa just before the break, and while it wasn't enough to see them take home the trophy there was enough in Villa's performance to please Emery with the season just one week away.

Villa had shown little moments of promise in the early exchanges. John McGinn delivered a wonderful ball into the area that was cleared by Willian Pacho, 19-year-old George Hemmings was getting into useful positions and Boubacar Kamara had a shot from distance whistle just wide of the post. But they were lacking the quality in the final ball to find any breakthrough as the European champions soon settled into the game.

After 15 minutes, PSG started to go through the gears. The likes of Doué had only just returned from World Cup duty after playing 45 minutes of the third-placed play-off against England 25 days ago. That muscle memory in the group didn't take long to kick in, though, as their slick passing found a way through Villa's midfield and into the box.

With Emiliano Martínez not with the group because of his World Cup commitments, it was down to Marco Bizot to block anything that came his way.

Bizot stood strong to deny Doué, but there was no stopping PSG's opener 20 seconds later. Vitinha did not need asking to take possession off Madjo in the middle of the pitch and a swift ball to Doué set them free again.

The Frenchman found Kvaratskhelia out to his left, the Georgian weaved into the box, made sure Matty Cash had no chance of stopping him, and fired past Bizot with a stunning strike.

It was the sort of finish that makes his €72 million (about £61 million) transfer fee they paid in January last year look like a bargain. But Villa cannot, due to the financial rules and regulations, shop in the same market. Instead they were hoping for their own moment of magic from Madjo.

The 17-year-old signed for £10 million in January from Metz — but was only recently cleared to play after a Court of Arbitration for Sport ruling — and led the line in his competitive debut for the club.

The opportunities kept coming for Madjo, but he kept missing. Twice McGinn put it on a plate for him and

Emery's European finals

Team v opponent (year)	Competition	Win/lose
Sevilla v Benfica (2014)	Europa League	Winners
Sevilla v Real Madrid (2015)	Super Cup	Runners up
Sevilla v FC Dnipro (2015)	Europa League	Winners
Sevilla v Barcelona (2016)	Super Cup	Runners up
Sevilla v Liverpool (2016)	Europa League	Winners
Arsenal v Chelsea (2019)	Europa League	Runners up
Villarreal v Man Utd (2021)	Europa League	Winners
Villarreal v Chelsea (2022)	Super Cup	Runners up
Aston Villa v SC Freiburg (2026)	Europa League	Winners
Aston Villa v PSG (2026)	Super Cup	Runners up

EYESWIDEOPEN/GETTY IMAGES; ; ANGELIKA WARMUTH/REUTERS;

for Emery

twice he missed the target, and then he hit the post. He got the reward for his perseverance when he scored the hardest chance that had come to him.

After another excellent ball from McGinn to the back post, he held off Pacho and finished past Matvey Safonov at his near post.

And it was Villa who ended the half on the front foot, with McGinn skipping down the line as he tried to spark yet another attack.

But these are the Champions League winners and on came Ousmane Dembélé as Luis Enrique looked to win this trophy for the third time. Villa created more chances, but it took just one moment of quality from their substitute to release Doué, who curled a lovely finish into the far corner.

It was initially flagged for offside, but Omar Artan, the Somalian referee who was denied access to America at the border and prevented from officiating at the World Cup, overturned it after VAR's involvement.

Villa continued to push with chances for Hemmings, João Gomes and substitutes Alysson and Tammy Abraham, but they couldn't find a way. PSG kept their composure and the lead to lift the trophy again.

But maybe, despite all of the changes both on and off the pitch, the future for this 'new Aston Villa' doesn't look so bad after all.

Paris Saint-Germain (4-3-3): M Safanov — A Hakimi, Marquinhos, W Pacho, Nuno Mendes (L Hernandez 75min) — João Neves (F Ruiz 75), Vitinha, Zaïre-Emery — M Aklioucheh (O Dembélé 46), D Doué (S Mayulu 87), K Kvaratskhelia (L Beraldo 88).
Aston Villa (4-2-3-1): M Bizot — M Cash, V Lindelof, P Torres (T Mings 79), I Maatsen — J Gomes (R Barkley 79), B Kamara (L Bogarde 72) — J McGinn (Alysson 73), E Buendia, G Hemmings — B Madjo (T Abraham 72).
Booked Torres, Gomes, McGinn.
Referee O Artan (Som).

Game podcast

Listen to the latest episode of The Game from The Times online now

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Set Rice free – then he can be the best player on earth

Matthew Syed

MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAGES

Title glory was the peak of Rice's career so far but he can hit greater heights

Declan Rice is a fantastic player, good bloke, leader, winner of the Premier League title with Arsenal, member of an England team who have reached two European Championship finals and a World Cup semi-final over the past six years; a 27-year-old who can legitimately claim to be one of the finest players of his generation. But I wonder if he could take a step further.

You'll remember the Ming vase metaphor from politics, the idea (first formulated, I think, by Roy Jenkins) that opposition parties often approach government as if carrying a rare and expensive piece of china across a concrete floor.

They don't want to stumble. They don't want to slip up. So they scrupulously guard against making any mistakes — which is often the biggest mistake of all.

Rice can do almost everything: corners, free kicks, interceptions, you name it. He is so versatile that he played at right back in the latter part of the game against DR Congo at the World Cup — and did jolly well. His adaptability is a huge strength.

But is it not fair to say that he is somewhat beholden to the Ming vase mindset? He hates making mistakes; hates misplacing passes; hates letting team-mates down. All admirable. But it means we rarely see Rice in expressive mode, cutting open defences, taking shots, altering the geometry of a game, in the way I believe he can.

Of course, part of this is down to managers who have often instructed him to play with a safety-first approach. But with a little more freedom, he could take that small but elusive step from exceptionally good to great; from outsider for the Ballon d'Or to winner. The kind of player who can break up attacks and then dart forward, shoot and score from outside the box, as he did in the (albeit unimportant) third-place play-off match against France, with a huge smile on his face.

How different from the regimented, tremulous performance we saw against, say, Ghana.

And it's not as if such a transformation is unheard of at the highest altitudes of world sport. Roger Federer at the peak of his powers realised he would never beat Rafael Nadal by slicing his backhand. At first it was awkward to drill a new technique of hitting flatter. It felt weird — indeed, almost immoral — to be making so many mistakes, not just in practice but in matches too.

But this was the necessary step to gaining the payoff; sure, he was making more errors but he was also making more winners, altering the geometry and psychology of matches. Federer took the Wimbledon title between winning the 2017 and 2018 Australian Opens, returning to No1 in the world — perhaps the finest achievement of his career.

The brilliant NBA player Goran Dragic had a similar journey, albeit from a lower base, a sportsman who was acutely risk averse when he entered the NBA. This was, perhaps, understandable for a player from Slovenia who was desperate to hold on to his place in the world's biggest league, but it also meant that he failed to make the biggest impact.

"I was not aggressive enough," he said in an interview at the time. Alvin Gentry, his coach, inspired him to take a different approach with the advice: "Kid, it doesn't matter how many mistakes you're going to make. Just go. Just play. Be yourself."

There's a lovely story told about Rice by Trevor Bumstead, who was a youth coach at West Ham United after Rice's (acutely painful) release by Chelsea. He asked the youngsters to perform a drill that incorporated a series of tasks including passing, shooting and dribbling. The real purpose of the exercise, however, was to test the attitude of the players. Each time they missed, they had to go to retrieve the ball. Would they do so quickly to continue with the task, or would they do so reluctantly, sluggishly, with a degree of petulance?

"He was fantastic at that because he'd miss and then he'd bring back his ball and have another go," Bumstead said in an interview with the BBC. "He used to assess very quickly what he'd done wrong and readjust. It was about, 'Can you keep doing it? Who is going to be the most persistent?' And Declan would always win those."

This speaks volumes about the attitude of Rice, about the work ethic that has taken him so far. It is why team-mates admire him, why managers eulogise him. This is a guy who gives back, who picks up the cones, who goes the extra mile.

One of the England assistant coaches told me: "He's a really selfless guy." He wasn't just talking about Rice's willingness to help younger team-mates off the pitch but to let them shine on it too.

Again, hugely admirable. But here's the thing: with your most talented player, do you not want him to shine himself rather than letting others do so? To have a crack at goal rather than always giving others the chance? To take the risk of going for the killer, high-tariff passes that can lead to goals (especially with his vision and accuracy) rather than leaving the pitch always with an unblemished pass completion rate?

In short, is there not a case for this most selfless of players to show a tad more selfishness, and thereby add even more to his team?

And this, I hope, is precisely what Mikel Arteta (who has talked of liberating Rice but has never fully followed through) has in mind for the upcoming season with the signings he's made, including the Brazil midfielder Bruno Guimarães from Newcastle United. It is an opportunity for Rice to drop the vase more often, and to thereby remake himself as perhaps the finest player in the world.

There was a profile last year in The Guardian in which someone who knows Rice well and speaks to him every day said "he has an extra gear". I hope this wonderful, admirable, thoroughly decent guy finds it — and finds it soon.

'Playing World Cup was father's wish'

CONTINUED FROM BACK

agent. There was speculation about Jorge's health during the World Cup this summer, when, during Argentina's first group-stage match, Messi broke down in tears after scoring the first goal.

He explained that it was due to "something unrelated to football" after going through "a few difficult, complicated days", but later revealed that his father's condition had worsened just before the start of the tournament.

After the World Cup final, where Argentina were defeated 1-0 in extra time by Spain, Messi spent time with Jorge at home before returning to MLS action with his club Inter Miami. He was absent from their 2-1 defeat by Monterrey at the weekend in the Leagues Cup.

There had been doubts whether Messi would feature at all at the World Cup but he revealed that he chose to play because it was his father's wish. It was the first time Jorge had not been able to attend a World Cup with his son.

In his tribute Messi described the difficulties of playing at the tournament during this time. "My legs couldn't go on any more. This time I tried to push myself beyond my physical limits, but I couldn't. I never felt well," he said, in reference to the final. "We weren't champions, but you don't know how much we enjoyed every match. Once again, you were right: I had to be there and play it."

He added: "I'm going to miss you so much, but you will always be present, especially in the upbringing of my children, because I will teach them and raise them the way you raised me."

Sport

One night, two golds for Britain

Matthew Hudson-Smith storms to 400m title while Angharad Evans wins in pool

Reports, page 60

Be adults, says Root after he scraps curfew

ECB U-turn means end to players' midnight rule

Elizabeth Ammon

Joe Root has said he will scrap the midnight curfew imposed by the England management in the wake of accusations of a drinking culture, but has told his players to "be adults".

The ECB issued updated guidelines to all players last month, which were signed off by Rob Key, England men's managing director, and reiterated that a midnight curfew was in place during all series and that players were not permitted to appear under the influence of alcohol in public.

They also stated that players should inform management if they were out of the team hotel after 10pm but, barely a month later, the ECB has made an extraordinary U-turn and confirmed it will be scrapping the curfew rules.

Root, having been re-appointed Test captain after the international retirement of Ben Stokes, said players needed to take responsibility for their own actions.

"There's not going to be a curfew. I don't think this needs to be a big deal, to be honest," Root, 35, said on the *Sky Sports Cricket* podcast. "My view on the curfew is that the players are doing their work and if you want guys to take responsibility on the field, they've got to feel like they can be grown adults and make strong decisions off it. That's for us as a team to manage well and police well for me and Stephen Fleming [the new Test head coach]."

England have been plagued by late-night drinking-related incidents in the past year. Harry Brook was fined and reprimanded for getting in a fight with a bouncer the night before an ODI in Wellington in November, while the Test team's trip to Noosa, Queensland, during the ill-fated Ashes series over the winter drew heavy criticism. Then in June an incident in a Chelsea nightclub after the first Test against New Zealand resulted in one-match suspensions for Gus Atkinson and Stokes. Both players were subsequently cleared of wrongdoing by the cricket regulator, amid confusion about whether players were even made aware of the curfew remaining in place after a match had finished.

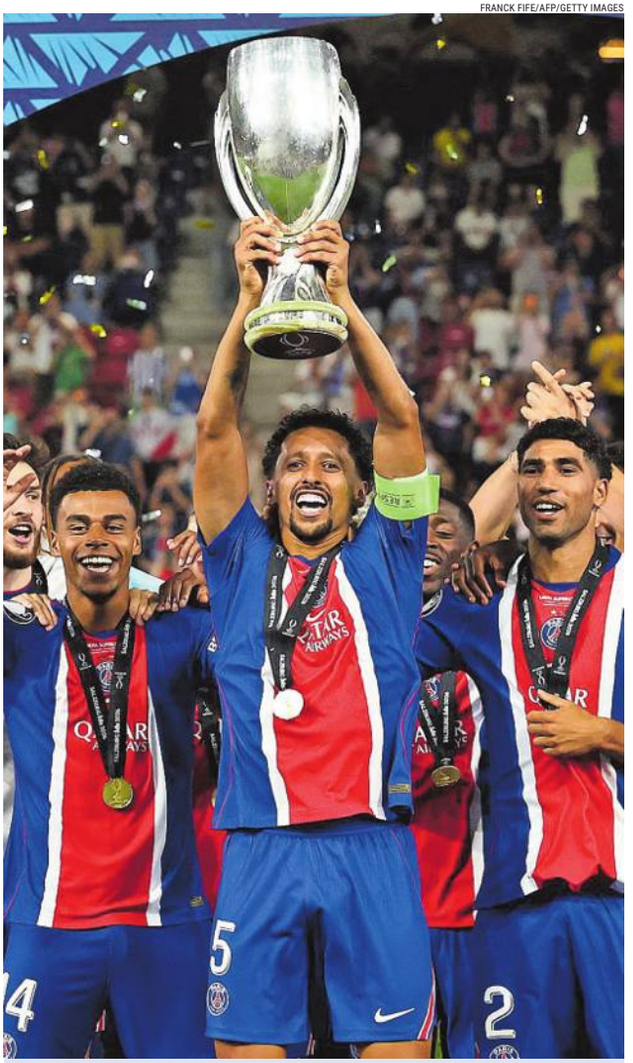
"We should be known for how we play cricket and what we do on the field. We should be on the back page of papers," Root said. "Be adults, look after yourselves, look after each other. We need to create a good, strong culture where you know when the right time is to celebrate and enjoy a win or to have a sensible beer, but remember you've got to play for England. I don't want people to feel like they can't enjoy winning a Test match because they want to have a beer or at the right time let their hair down and then that's absolutely fine.

"We're human beings at the end of the day. You know what your responsibilities are, you know how you need to prepare for a Test match and what it takes, and the effects that these things can have on you. So be smart, be sensible and just be an adult."

An ECB statement confirmed the withdrawal of the curfew, saying: "We have a Test captain and coach who are looking at how they set team standards

Continued on page 56

FRANCK FIFE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



New season, same old PSG

Champions League holders Paris Saint-Germain retain Super Cup by beating Unai Emery's Europa League winners Aston Villa 2-1. Report, pages 62-63

Messi may stop playing soon

Joe Harston

Lionel Messi has said he is unsure how much longer he will continue playing football for after the death of his father.

Messi's father, Jorge, died aged 68 last week in his home town of Rosario in Argentina, after a long illness.

In a tribute on Instagram, Messi wrote: "I don't know what I'm going to do without you. I don't know how to move forward. I only played football and now I have quite a few doubts about whether I'm going to keep doing it for much longer.

"You were by my side from the beginning; there was so little left until the end. Why couldn't you hold on just a little longer so we could finish it together?"

Messi, 39, was accompanied by his father throughout his career, which began when he joined Barcelona at the age of 13. Jorge also acted as his

Continued on page 63

Lawrence and Daly dropped

Charlie Morgan Senior Rugby Writer
Will Kelleher Deputy Rugby Correspondent

Steve Borthwick, the England head coach, has added Alex Coles, Asher Opoku-Fordjour, Guy Pepper, Jack van Poortvliet and Seb Atkinson to his centrally contracted group of players a year out from the World Cup.

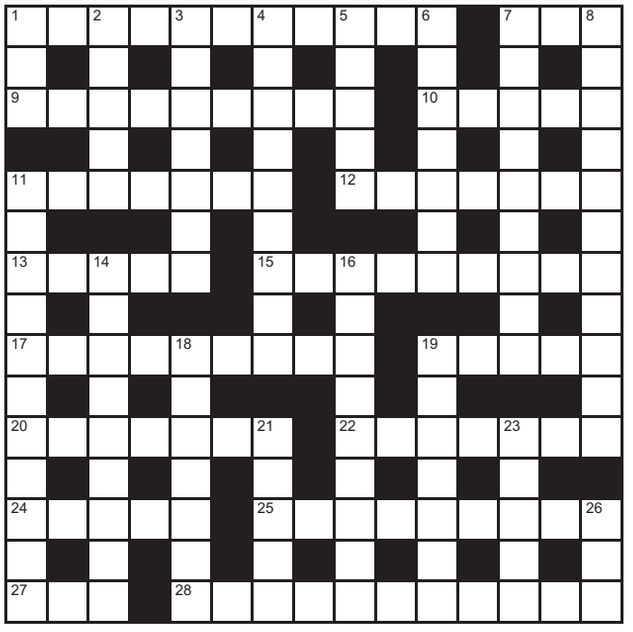
Discarded from the group of 25 players are Tom Willis, Ben Curry, Tom Roebuck, Elliot Daly and Ollie Lawrence. Borthwick, therefore, has brought in three forwards and two backs while releasing two forwards and three backs.

This core group of players in the "enhanced elite player squad" each receive about £150,000 a year instead of a Test match fee. In turn they are managed more closely by the RFU.

Coles, the 26-year-old Northampton

Continued on page 59

Times Crossword 29,620



ACROSS

1 French chef screws up having left out desserts (11)
7 Ill-mannered individual's curt sign of contempt (3)
9 Detested suit Charlie leaves packed away (9)
10 Delivery at last bearing winemaker's must (5)
11 Wanting weapon? Bow's safe (7)
12 Countryman in street every so often killed maquis (7)
13 Attending Conference maybe leader's initial form drops (5)
15 Travelling underground primarily, one arriving in High Barnet? (4,5)
17 Alan Shearer missing an odd practice session (9)
19 Indian freezing, without scrap of clothing (5)
20 Where archaeologist would study Carthage is at uni possibly (7)
22 Collection of letters ended with John swapping vowels (7)
24 Thin as Oliver on screen? (5)
25 Ruined relations essentially fixed by international talks (2,7)
27 Root for Nigerian PM making comeback (3)
28 Trump presented cryptically coarse (5-6)

DOWN

1 Take care, shed leaks close to door (3)
2 Stadium regularly painted rear stands (5)
3 Brown rat mainly eaten by animal in caravan? (7)
4 Counter-agents stationed in revolutionary state (9)
5 In Winnebago, do things one long awaited (5)
6 Designer pen catalogue (7)
7 Crime book to need protective covering (9)
8 Yet to be paid, striking (11)
11 Property use wrecked part of building (5,6)
14 Articles bloke picked up touring Brussels institution (9)
16 Bare region no longer covered by crop? (4,5)
18 Who might conduct tests when perhaps on QE2? (7)
19 Understudy, on reflection, pans upcoming film (3,4)
21 Something rolled in gold by émigré, it's said? (5)
23 Sound check that might terminate rally (5)
26 National setter? (3)

Yesterday's solution 29,619

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TIMES 2

August 13 | **2026**

None more nepo!

How Cindy Crawford's daughter and Richard Gere's son got their act together

tim

Caitlin Moran's Celebrity Watch

6 Ejae

Good day, dearest Times reader! Maybe you are on your holiday — your August vacation — and are taking advantage of a "looser" daily schedule. Perhaps you only woke half an hour ago, luxuriating in a human's inalienable right to let the summer months unravel in an increasingly laissez-faire manner. Perhaps you are so on holiday that "a busy day" consists of drinking an iced coffee in the garden, spending two hours staring at the sky — dim as a box full of toes — before working yourself up to the biggest task of the day: slicing up and then eating some watermelon.

If this is the case, spare a compassionate thought for the K-pop stars of the world. For those not quite abreast of the whole K-pop thing, the TLDR is that K-pop is massive. Korean pop music is a gigantic global force: there are seemingly thousands of K-pop bands, dominating the charts and making the pop music of Britain and the US seem like ancient, 20th-century ideas.

But! It seems this global dominance comes at a price. This week in The Sunday Times the *KPop Demon Hunters* star Ejae shared an insight into the "brutal reality" of training to be a K-pop star and it does not include any pleasant August holidays at all.

Ejae's record company signed her up as a teenager, then the next 11 years consisted of drilling her in singing, dancing, media interviews, photoshoots — plus some rather more recherché skills.

"We learnt Chinese because they knew China would be a huge global audience," Ejae began, which sounds pretty logical. "We couldn't have ear piercings. It was very much no sodas, no greasy food, keeping yourself unbloated and fit. I wouldn't say it was healthy."

It does sound profoundly unfun and likely to make teenage girls fixate on their body image to a painful degree. However, so far, so much patriarchy. It's the next parts of the "training" that seem... more out of left field.

"We couldn't chew gum because it would make your jaw bigger," Ejae revealed. There were also pouting lessons. "We would have to smile in front of the mirror with a ChapStick here," she said, demonstrating a pout that could hold a tube of lipstick between your upper lip and under your nose, "because it makes your muscles grow and your face shape [better]."

Finally, and most random of all, she couldn't squat, "because it made your knees ugly". At the age of 50, I thought I had heard every single batshit thing a young woman could be told about "being beautiful", so I'm kind of in awe of K-pop for inventing a new one: a fear of ugly knees.

Every day's a schoolday! Or: 11 years are schooldays, if you want to be a K-pop star.

5 The Breakfast Club

There was tantalising news from Hollywood as we learnt that, before his death, the writer and director John Hughes had started work on a sequel to his 1985 teen movie *The Breakfast Club*, which starred Molly Ringwald, *right*. Although there are no more details, one presumes it was called *Lunch!* and would have been followed by a sequel, *Lunch 2: Dinner*. We can only hope Hughes got enough down in note form for someone to bring the whole Significant Meals trilogy to our screens.

4 Jason Arday

It is officially Schadenfreude Summer, with every news outlet and online platform engaging in synchronised tutting over Jason Arday, the Cambridge professor who eventually resigned from his post after denying all allegations that he is, to use the appropriate playground term, "a Billy Bullshitter".

Thirty marathons completed while suffering an epileptic fit and a broken leg; being threatened by a knife-wielding stranger not picked up on CCTV; £5.5 million raised for charities for which no actual details can be disclosed, as he had signed NDAs — the spread of Arday's unsubstantiated claims is impressively wide. Being nonverbal until he was 11 and illiterate until 18, having a brain tumour and being paid "1.4 million" for his forthcoming memoir — though, conveniently, in a currency not specified: you can't fault Arday's range. This is ambitious hogwash. It's gloriously freewheeling cobblers.

But it's also a disproportionate backlash he's facing: after all, Donald Trump comes out with stuff like this every day from the White House — and no one suggests that he got his job on a DEI initiative or that his self-aggrandising horseshit means white dudes shouldn't be in politics.

Besides, it feels like something obvious is being missed here. Arday should remain a professor at Cambridge but just transfer to teaching fiction writing. He clearly has an immense gift for it.

3 The Bellinghams

With the World Cup over, Britain can still feel a surge of pride that "our lads" played well and that the goalering skills of Jude Bellingham turned him, during the course of the tournament, into a global phenomenon.

Perhaps, more importantly, it alerted me to who he actually is — no small feat, given my profound lack of interest in the world of footballerering. And now Bellingham is on my radar I have become obsessed with the naming rituals of his family. For this week I learnt that he has a brother who is also a footballerer and plays for Borussia Dortmund — and that his name is... Jobe Bellingham.

Jude... and Jobe. It feels as if there's some kind of method here. Some kind of arcane rule that guides the naming of Bellingham children. It's like one of those rounds on *Only Connect* where you have to guess what the next thing in a logic sequence will be. I feel like I'm so close to cracking it! If anyone has any further information about the naming logic of the Bellingham family, please get in touch.

2 Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor

He's the problem that won't go away. Not-Prince Andrew, the former Duke of York, may well have been vanished from official duties and sequestered somewhere in Norfolk where his presence doesn't offend the public's eye, but for the royal family he's still present, in the form of "a bunch of royal protocol paperwork that is sitting on someone's desk, and making their life a nightmare".

This week we learnt that, despite his ties to the dead paedophile Jeffrey Epstein, Not-Prince Andrew is still entitled to a royal ceremonial funeral. He remains included in the government's "bridge" plans, which prepare for the deaths of members of the royal family, The Mail on Sunday revealed. Although the details are unknown, his funeral could be held at either St George's Chapel in Windsor or at the Royal Burial Ground at Frogmore, the chosen resting place for other royals that massively f*ed up, eg ex-King Edward VIII.**

The "bridge" is the code name given to the plans for an important royal death. Operation Forth Bridge was the plan drawn up for the death of Prince Philip, while Operation London Bridge referred to Queen Elizabeth II. We do not yet know which bridge Andrew's plans have been named after. Given how dealing with him seems to be an endless task, perhaps a reprise for the Forth Bridge would seem appropriate? Or maybe Andrew should, finally, be removed from these plans altogether, as it is all a bridge too far.

Thank you. Thank you for listening to my joke.

Perez Hilton

This week's top entry is, I'm sorry to say, not the fabulous chucklefest you are accustomed to. But it's a story that spans almost the entirety of "celebrity culture" in the 21st century, taking in misogyny, cruelty, body-shaming, multiple nervous breakdowns and suicide attempts, and — most importantly — this all being driven by the new Wild West of the internet, which granted unprecedented levels of power to the few early adopters who realised its potential.

And it is a story that ends in unimaginable horror. Last week the gossip blogger Perez Hilton — once The Most Hated Man in Hollywood, but now merely the kind of dwindling D-list celebrity he would have taunted for their own failing career — was hospitalised after he began a livestream on TikTok and commenced mutilating himself, on camera, with a kitchen knife.

In the early 2000s Hilton was one of the most powerful people in showbiz. His website, perezhilton.com, was the first to give 24/7 coverage to a new generation of very young, mainly female celebrities: Paris Hilton, Britney Spears, Amy Winehouse, Christina Aguilera, Lindsay Lohan, Lady Gaga, Miley Cyrus, Ariana Grande.

Although Hilton was, for his favoured celebrities, seen as something of a star-maker — his website received more than eight million hits a day, his fortune soared to an estimated $20 million and he was on the guest list of all the big parties — his primary business was performative cruelty.

Reading through a list of his most "infamous" moments provokes a gasp now: he would draw cocaine or semen on the faces of female celebrities he disliked. The fat-shaming of stars, often teenaged — Mischa Barton, Lily Allen and the like — was constant. He published a paparazzi "upskirt" shot of Miley Cyrus when she was just 17, something that many suggested was, technically, the distribution of a child sex abuse image.

But he was unapologetic about it all. His nickname for Cyrus was "Slutty Cyrus". The list goes on: he suggested Spears's children had Down's syndrome. He stated that the actor Adam Sandler's child was so fat, she should go on a diet; the child was, at the time, 14 months old. Perhaps most disturbing, he would write long descriptions of what he imagined female celebrities' genitals looked like and how vile he presumed them to be. Oh, and he constantly threatened to "out" gay celebrities. In the end Lance Bass from the Nineties boy band NSYNC admitted that he was gay as a result of Hilton's constant hounding.

And there was merchandise, horrible merchandise. When the actor Heath Ledger died, at the age of 28, Hilton started flogging T-shirts with Ledger's face on, captioned, "Why couldn't it be Britney?" At the time Spears had experienced a profound nervous breakdown and had to be sectioned, in front of live news crews.

However, around the point he was being called the Most Hated Man in Hollywood, his immense power started to wane. The coming of social media in the 2010s meant that celebrities suddenly realised it didn't matter what Perez said about them any more: they could just take to Instagram, Twitter or, latterly, TikTok, and talk directly to the public instead. The glittery, Botoxed workers had seized the means of production.

Hilton saw his career rapidly start to slide. With the hits on his website dwindling, he followed all the usual routes pursued by celebrities entering their twilight phase — appearing on *Celebrity Big Brother* but not winning it; writing an unsuccessful children's book; pivoting to charitable causes — one of which was, paradoxically, an anti-bullying campaign. Exactly the kind of things that he would have been poisonous about other struggling celebrities attempting.

By this year he had suffered health crises, had mounting medical bills, had found God and had attempted to reinvent himself as a more "ethical" celebrity journalist, with very modest returns.

Last week, clearly in the middle of a mental health crisis, Hilton turned on his TikTok livestream — and starting self-harming. And this is where the story starts to have the tinge of a dark fable or Greek myth. The man who made so many verbal attacks on other people's appearances — who scrawled over photos of their heads, who defaced their mouths and eyes — now driven to brutally re-enact it on himself.

That there will be a movie about all this — a modern horror parable about the dark side of those who become parasites on celebrity — seems inevitable. As is the reckoning, now a decade overdue, about the final toll for performative online cruelty. We think it doesn't really matter — "Just don't look!" — or that the only people it truly affects are those the inhumanity is aimed at. But of course it's not like that. You can't hurt people without it, some day, hurting you.

It's time to enjoy a Gone to Pot Summer. Are you with me?

Deborah Ross

If you were to see me at the moment, which thankfully you can't, you would note the congealed fake tan that's puddled at my ankles and behind my knees. I don't blame the fake tan brand (Dove) because chances are I messed up somewhere along the line.

That exfoliating cream, did I massage it in while deploying "a circular motion" as always advised? Did I go too elliptical? Did I, heaven forbid, and in a moment of distraction, go too square even? What if my Jewishness came out and I was, unconsciously, driven to follow a Star of David shape? Wouldn't you puddle, in all the confusion? Wouldn't you go meshuga, and hang around the knees and ankles, awaiting further instruction?

This is the long way of saying: it's too much. A short, sharp heatwave, OK, most women can cope with the levels of grooming expected, but when it's as prolonged as this? I can't take it any more. I've reached Howard Beale in *Network* levels of fury. (I'm looking forward to winter and putting it all away in... socks. Remember them?)

It's so all-consuming I've reached the stage of: if it isn't preoccupying men, it won't be preoccupying me. Ladies, it's time to own your dead skin cells! Ladies, it's time to throw off the shackles, free up your time and enjoy a Gone to Pot Summer.

Are you with me? I'm already ahead of the game because, due to my inept exfoliating attempts I was, at the last count, 95 per cent dead skin cells. You may have some catching up to do but I'm confident you can get there. Eventually we may march on parliament (equal grooming standards for all!), shedding nicely as we go. People may well think it's snowing. Let them.

Today, I launch the Gone to Pot Summer manifesto, as not featured in Elle, Vogue or Grazia, although not through want of trying. "Clear off," is all they said. However, before we get to the manifesto proper, would you agree I'm a natural to head up the Gone to Pot Summer movement?

Given that I'm already 95 per cent dead skin cells and my hair, when it encounters humidity, explodes frizzily and takes on the look of a dandelion seedhead? Given that passing young children want to blow on me and make a wish? Is that settled then? Having said that, if you have similar hair, commiserations — but also: do throw your hat in the ring. Do you own a hat, by the way? It could, I think, come in useful. If, that is, you don't want to be blown on in the street by some little lad wishing for a trike and an Action Man?

On to the meat of the Gone to Pot Summer manifesto that states that we, the undersigned, have better things to do than:

- Lock ourselves in the bathroom for three days before finally mustering the courage for an at-home bikini wax (press strip firmly, yowl, inspect the one little curly hair stuck to it, throw packet at wall).
- Paint our own toenails, to give the trafficked Vietnamese girl in the nail parlour a break, then race to the chemist for nail polish remover as it looks like a drunk with the shakes has had a go.
- Shave, depilate, thread, splash out on electrolysis, lasers. Just like the suffragettes, who would have achieved nothing had they not agreed to feel terrifically ashamed of any armpit hair.
- Give up on fake tans and get a real one, but just to remind you: don't hog all the skin cancer. Leave some for someone else.
- Fret about the latest body part to hate by reading "ten tips for a sexy back" while considering fillers to plump out your "Ozempic feet". Yes? Or no? Yes, said our poll, but it turned out they were joking.
- Last, what you must do is embrace your hideous feet, like the man who looks at his thickened, yellow, fungal toenails, looks at his sandals, and says: "Yeah, that'll be fine." See you on the Gone to Pot march? I'm now 98 per cent dead skin cells, so I think you'll know who I am. (At 100 per cent, I believe you crumble into a pile of dust.)

Something to chew on, Angela

I sympathise with Angela Rayner, who has said she can't give up vaping because her nicotine addiction has plunged her "into a lifetime of purgatory". I sympathise because my nicotine addiction has plunged me into a lifetime of purgatory too. My first thought when I wake in the morning? "Ah, purgatory, here we go again."

I don't vape. I chew nicotine gum and have done all day every day since I gave up smoking 15 years ago. Rayner says she started vaping to give up smoking, and you have to hand it to the cigarette companies who are now behind many of the vape brands. Is there a more classic example of: now we've cut you, might we sell you a plaster?

I chew nonstop. I am chewing now. But her purgatory is better than my purgatory. The gum chewer is ill-served. The gum chewer is ill-served on the high street. There are no gum shops alternating with the Turkish barbers. The gum-chewer is also ill-served flavour-wise. Where's our blue raspberry, watermelon, bubblegum, mango? Does Ms Rayner have any idea how tiresome "original" and "mint" become?

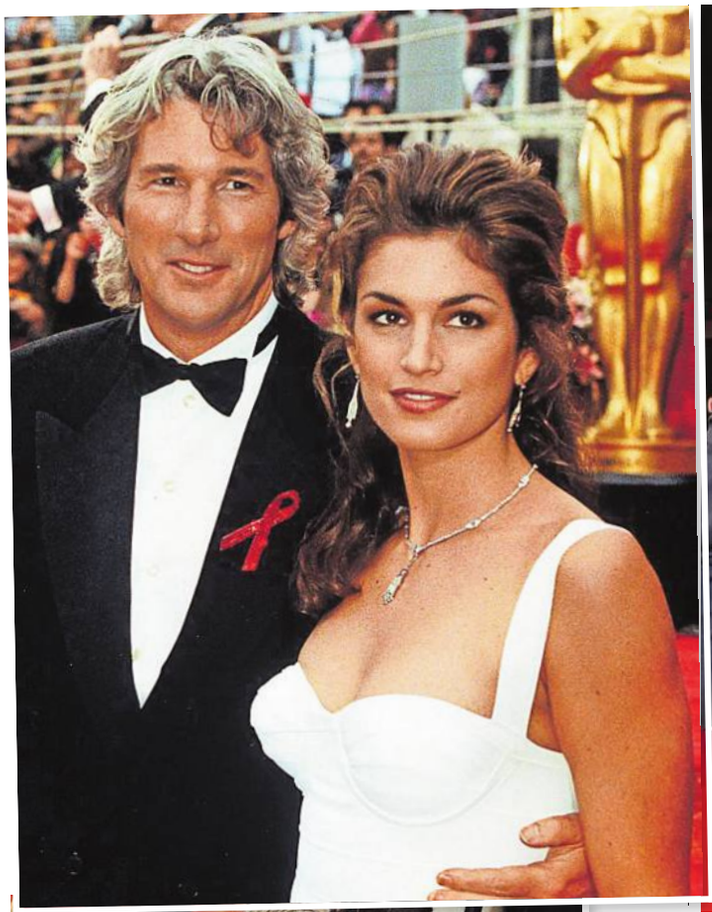
I've tried giving up and have always failed, which is a pity because it's a pain. I once fell asleep before spitting it out and my partner woke up with it in his chest hair. "At least it wasn't my HRT patch," I told him, but he wasn't cheered. He scissored it out even as I was looking forward to having a good yank so I could say: "And that, my friend, is what it feels like to be waxed." But, alas, he wouldn't play ball.

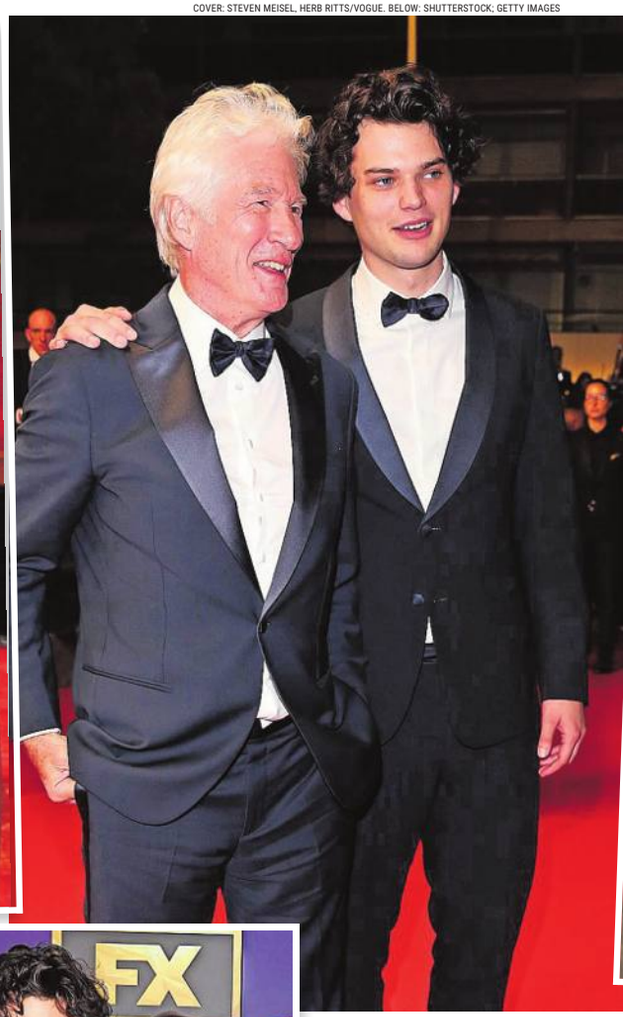
Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere: the

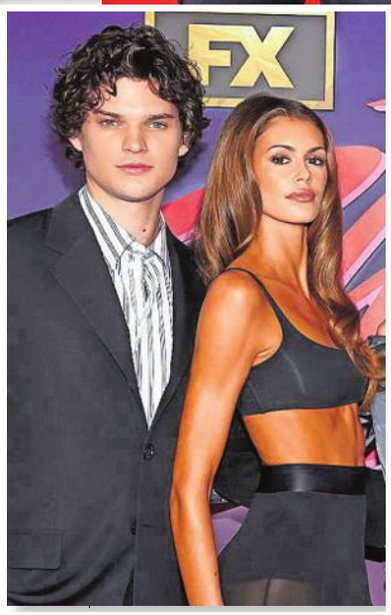
They've led very different lives but do have one thing in common: their A-list parents were once married.

By Claire Cohen

COVER: STEVEN MEISEL, HERB RITTS/VOGUE. BELOW: SHUTTERSTOCK; GETTY IMAGES







Top, from left: Richard Gere and Cindy Crawford in 1993; Gere with his son Homer in 2024; Crawford with her daughter, Kaia Gerber, in 2025. Above, from left: Homer and Richard Gere with Carey Lowell in 2012; Homer Gere and Kaia Gerber this month

Twenty minutes after first meeting at a bar in the Los Feliz neighbourhood of Los Angeles, Homer Gere decided to clear the air with Kaia Gerber.

"I was like, 'Should we just acknowledge the fact that our parents were married?'" he says in a new cover interview with American Vogue. "She was like, 'Yeah. Cool.' And that was it."

Well, that could have been awkward. Gerber's mother, Cindy Crawford, and Gere's father, Richard, were one of the hottest couples of the early Nineties — the supermodel, the film star and a 17-year age gap. They went official on the Oscars red carpet in 1991, married in Las Vegas in December that year with a tinfoil ring, and split in 1995 (not before placing an advert in this newspaper to put to bed rumours about the state of their marriage and Richard's sexuality).

"We are heterosexual and monogamous and take our commitment to each other very seriously," it read. "There is not and never has been a prenuptial agreement of any kind. Reports of a divorce are totally false. We both look forward to having a family."

Which they did, only not with each other. Gerber is Crawford's lookalike 24-year-old daughter with her businessman husband, Rande Gerber, while Gere's mother is the actress Carey Lowell, to whom Gere Sr was married until 2016.

Now the former power couple's children are sharing the red carpet themselves. In a stroke of genius casting, Kaia Gerber and Homer Gere are starring in a TV adaptation of Bret Easton Ellis's *The Shards*, about a group of fast-living elite private school kids. Not much of a stretch for the nepo babies of Hollywood royalty, you might think. Except that, as Vogue reveals, the pair couldn't have had more different upbringings.

That much is clear before you've read a word. In the magazine's photoshoot Gerber works her angles — as you'd expect of someone who has been modelling since she was ten — and looks every inch the star. Gere? He goofily smiles at the camera, as though posing for a family photo.

This is his first interview and he's nervous. "I just want to appear likeable," he admits. "I grew up in the most normal possible situation given who my father was, I didn't grow up in the industry at all. I had never been on a professional set until last summer."

Bless. It would be fair to say that Richard Gere, who was 50 when his son was born (he named him after his father, an insurance agent), took great care to raise him away from the Hollywood spotlight — which encroached only when his legendary agent Ed Limato pulled up to the family home in a limousine.

It was an "idyllic" childhood in Westchester, upstate New York, that mirrored Richard's middle-class upbringing as closely as possible. Family was a priority, and the actor would turn down roles if it meant being away from his son for long periods. The peace was, presumably, shattered only by his parents' divorce, which took four years to finalise as they wrangled over Lowell's share of the *Pretty Woman* star's fortune.

"I had grown up my entire childhood with people asking, 'Are you gonna be an actor when you're older?' And I was like, 'F*** no.' I was good in school, and I had no pressure from my parents. Acting was always over there," the young Gere tells *Vogue*. "It was some other thing that other people did."

He went to college and bounced from major to major before landing on art. In 2022 a friend asked him to act in a student film and he discovered that he enjoyed it. But it wasn't his "calling", and on graduating in 2024 he took a gap year and drove across the country, unsure where to turn next.

Destiny came calling in the form of a talent agent who just happened to see his student film (it had a pretty eye-catching name on the cast list, after all).

"I was like, OK, maybe this is a sign," Gere says, seemingly without a trace of irony. He auditioned for two series — *Euphoria* and *The Shards* — getting a call asking him to do a screen test while he was in India with his father (for the Dalai Lama's birthday — I'm not making this up). He landed both roles.

His father hasn't, he says, advised him on the art of acting, but has counselled him about on-set politics and coping with fame. Which, incidentally, Crawford credited him with teaching her during their marriage.

Might Gerber be gently rolling her eyes at this point? After all, while it's perfectly possible for men to find fame later — Richard was 30 by the time he made his name in *American Gigolo* — there remains a sense that, as a woman, if you haven't made it by 25 it's probably too late.

Crawford started at 18, after a Midwestern childhood shucking corn on local farms to help her single mother (her parents divorced after the death of her brother, Jeffrey, from leukaemia, aged three) before dropping out of a chemical engineering degree to pursue modelling.

"Fame was something that I was born into, so I didn't experience what it was like to *become* famous," Gerber

kids from fame

tells Vogue. "I kind of thought that my way of being raised was the most anonymous it could get under the circumstances, and then I met Homer. Like, there are no photos of him as a child online, whereas my entire childhood and teenage years are on the internet. I can only imagine. I'm 24 but... very interviewed."

Her childhood in Malibu was one of beach days, being driven to parties by her parents and trying to be a good girl so as not to embarrass them.

Still, she always had "big dreams" — modelling for Versace at ten and walking the runway for Calvin Klein four days after turning 16. By 17 she was living in her own New York apartment, having taken a high school graduation equivalency exam.

Since then there have been dozens of catwalks, campaigns and acting roles. She has dated the comedian Pete Davidson, the actor Jacob Elordi and is in a relationship with Bill Pullman's son Lewis, also an actor. "I think I've been labelled in ways that are quite misogynistic: serial dater, slut, greedy," she tells Vogue.

Basically, she had to grow up fast, watched by her 9.5 million Instagram followers. Gere, who met his girlfriend last year on Hinge, doesn't have social media. It means he wasn't fully aware of the online swooning over his "dad bod" in stills from *Euphoria*, in which he's wearing nothing but underwear.

Only men get to have natural bodies and be praised for it, of course. "People have always commented on my body, which is hard," Gerber confesses to Vogue. "I've had disordered eating in my life. People are like, 'You look terrible,' and it doesn't exactly make you go, 'Oh, good. Let me get over this mental illness then!'"

Yet despite their different paths to fame, Gere and Gerber have ended up in the same place and are apparently close — partying together until 3am the night before the Vogue interview. And while Gerber is all go go go, Gere has no projects in the pipeline, other than perhaps another of his favourite ten-day silent retreats. Ah, so not totally un-Hollywood then.

"He has no interest in being famous," Ryan Murphy, the creator of *The Shards* says. "I think he'll stay pure," whereas "Kaia is so knowing... she's been around the block."

Indeed, she has already offered him the benefit of her experience. "'Homer, unfortunately with this show, it's not like you're just any unknown actor and people will judge you as an unknown actor. But what that's done for me is make me want to work harder,'" she recounts telling him.

After all, there's surely no one who can understand you better in Hollywood than a fellow nepo baby — even if your parents were once married.

Single and childless at 44? I didn't think that would be me

At 28 life seemed set for Claire McGowan. Then came a string of failed relationships and disappointments...

I never thought I'd end up, at the age of 44, single and childless. Yet here I am, like many women, approaching middle age without kids. According to data from the Office for National Statistics, births in England and Wales fell for the fourth year in a row in 2025, to their lowest level in nearly half a century.

So how did it play out this way for me? Until my mid-twenties I'd never thought about having children as a choice. I grew up in rural Northern Ireland, where families of six or even nine children were not unusual (mine, with four, was relatively small). Abortion was illegal until six years ago, despite Northern Ireland being part of the UK, and the Catholic school I went to taught us that contraception was sinful. Many of my friends got married then pregnant right out of university. My cousin, two weeks older than me, had a baby at 18, and at 44 is a grandmother. I felt far too young to think about that — I was consumed by the idea of university and moving to England.

In my twenties I was diagnosed with a huge ovarian cyst after months of bloating and indigestion. Because I was young my stomach muscles had held it in and it didn't become noticeable until things were quite serious. I was rushed into surgery, terrified I might not make it through. Once it was out, I was told it had been early-stage cancer.

Claire McGowan

I remember absorbing the shock of that in the hospital. They told me not to worry — I could still get pregnant with one ovary and, at most, my fertility might be reduced by about 15 per cent. I'm not sure how they arrived at this figure but I felt relief on being told it.

It took me a long time to recover from the surgery, a midline incision that opened me up from navel to groin and left me hardly able to walk for months. I spent the summer on my parents' sofa watching *Shipwrecked: Battle of the Islands*. I found it challenging mentally, once I was physically out of danger. But I was getting better, at least, and had not needed chemotherapy. When back on my feet I moved to London, started a new job, began dating a colleague and married him at 28. Life seemed set.

However, I didn't get pregnant. We weren't too worried — there was time. A year went by and the tests we took came back normal, even mine. But we were falling apart anyway and broke up before we could seek treatment.

I was 31, and although crushed by the wreckage of my life, I assumed I had time for a family.

Fast-forward seven years, I was in another relationship and we were talking about having a baby. But after almost two years of investigations and waiting, I was told that scar tissue from my operation was blocking my remaining fallopian tube, and I'd developed painful endometriosis. If I wanted a baby I'd need IVF.

From then on things became increasingly complicated and maddening. After a torturously long wait for an NHS fertility appointment, having surgery for the endometriosis, undergoing lots of tests with confusing results, being told wrongly that the issue was with my partner, having my medical records lost, and just sneaking in under the wire of turning 40, I was informed that I might not be allowed IVF at all, since I'd had ovarian cancer.

I was stunned — and furious. In 18 months of appointments no one had mentioned this. It also wasn't true, but two months later Covid hit and the clinic shut. Then that relationship ended too.

About a year later I woke up one morning and realised I was going to need to freeze my eggs. I had barely thought about it before, but I was 39 and I'd already left it quite late. I did three rounds privately, getting a decent result of 14 eggs. I felt relieved that the pressure was off.

I was just getting into another relationship with a man I met on Bumble, one that moved fast as we fell deeply in love. At 42 I was engaged, and we had discussed using my eggs in the next year or so. Then, in the middle of wedding planning, my fiancé left me and I was single again. I was devastated in so many ways, not least because I felt he had led me on about having children only to say he'd never wanted them.

This is how you get to be 44 and childless. In my new novel, *The Quickening*, I write about a Britain where women's fertility is tightly monitored and contraception and abortion are banned. To me this isn't abstract. It's based on a lifetime of tests and pain, reproductive failures and uncertainty. It is the reality for many women in the world in 2026.

I have never been desperate to have children — I feel that if I were, I would have acted more decisively years ago. I've found this ambivalence to be quite painful at times. When I pick up my friends' babies or hold my nephews' hands I think about how I don't have children and maybe never will. But when I travel and spend my time exactly how I like, I realise that I have the complete freedom to go on retreats, sing in a choir or do yoga whenever I wish.

I'm so aware, all the time, that I need to decide about children — but I can't. Often I worry that I will regret it once it's too late, but I can't make the choice to move forward. So I wait, in limbo. It's possible that life has made the choice for me and, in the end, it will be the right one.

> **"When I pick up my friends' babies I think about how I don't have any children"**

***The Quickening* by Claire McGowan (Little, Brown £22). To order a copy go to timesbookshop.co.uk or call 020 3176 2935. Free UK standard P&P on online orders over £25. Special discount available for Times+ members**

JEFF KRAVITZ, DIOGO CARDOSO/UEFA/GETTY IMAGES

Ronaldo's hardest match is kicking

Reaching football's highest pinnacle is nothing compared with being a married man at 41, says Ben Machell

On Tuesday Cristiano Ronaldo married his long-term girlfriend, Georgina Rodríguez, in a civil ceremony described as "intimate and private" by the Daily Mail, "civil and private" by Reuters and "private" by ¡Hola!. You get the picture. We weren't invited.

The details of celebrity weddings do not normally excite me. However, like many people I have a long-term fascination with what's going on inside Ronaldo's head: the ego, the vanity, the obsessional control-freakery and maximalist attitude to everything he sets his mind to, from goals to trophies to children to abs. That a skinny boy from Madeira with a father who died from alcohol-related liver failure and a poor, hard-working mum has, through force of will, been able to transform himself into one of the world's greatest players and a billion-pound brand is just... intensely interesting. He's like Christmas for anyone with an interest in Freudian analysis.

Which is why his wedding is important to anyone who, like me, has been trying to understand this guy for ever. Who was present? Well, obviously, there was Rodríguez, whom he met ten years ago while she was working at a Gucci store in Madrid. If she'd taken that job at Wickes her life could have been very different, but their meeting signalled the end of Ronaldo's "wild oats" era.

This period of time is worth a brief diversion. In 2007, during his first spell with Manchester United, Ronaldo dated the *Hollyoaks* actress Gemma Atkinson. Her account of their first date? "We just went to my house and drank cups of tea and watched *Only Fools and Horses*," which is the most appealing kiss-and-tell I've ever heard. A later girlfriend, the Italian model Raffaella Fico, recalled him doing abdominal exercises after dinner, which suggests a deepening obsession with physical perfection, though perhaps he was watching *Minder* while he did them. Later still, when he split from the Russian model Irina Shayk she reportedly lost 11 million followers on social media as a result. This says less about Ronaldo than his incredibly loyal fans, who don't follow gorgeous women on Instagram because they're gorgeous but rather because they go out with their hero. Which is healthy.

Anyway, back to the wedding guest list. Interestingly there were no reports of former team-mates present. Patrice Evra, who played with him at Man U, described once being invited round to Ronaldo's for lunch only to find that the meal was plain chicken, salad and water, and that his host expected them to do football drills then go for a swim immediately afterwards. "That is why I recommend to anybody, when Cristiano asks you for lunch to his house, just say no, don't go. He is a machine," he said.

When Rio Ferdinand publicly beat Ronaldo at table tennis he became so angry that he immediately bought a ping-pong table, practised nonstop for two weeks, then made sure to beat him in a rematch. Wayne Rooney describes how Ronaldo would stand in front of the mirror telling himself he was "beautiful" and how he — Rooney — would tell him that, no, he was in fact ugly. All of which, taken as a whole, may be why none of these former team-mates were at the nuptials. Perhaps they were worried they'd all have to do chin-ups between the protein shakes drinks reception and raw-veg dinner.

Is Ronaldo as vain as Rooney suggests? Well, when a comedically goofy bronze bust of him was unveiled at Madeira airport — a bust that made him look like a clean-shaved *Homo erectus* mid-acid trip — his fans were outraged. But he merely requested the sculptor remove some of the lines from around his eyes. Which makes me think he has more of a sense of humour than he's given credit for.

Above: Georgina Rodríguez and Cristiano Ronaldo. Left: Rodríguez at the Met Gala in May. Right: Ronaldo playing for Portugal last year. Below: with four of their children

His five children were at the wedding, however. Ronaldo's approach to fatherhood is... intriguing, definitely worth dwelling on. In 2010 he had Cristiano Jr, who was born in the US. The identity of his mother remains a secret. Then in 2017 he had twins, born in the US via surrogate. By this point he was with Rodríguez, and five months later they had a child, Alana Martina. So... what's that about? Most wealthy young men in his position actively do what they can to avoid the responsibility of fatherhood. Ronaldo has deliberately and systematically sought it out.

The best theory I can come up with is that here is a guy who has spent his life turning his career into a highly controlled, highly managed project. And that he has the exact same attitude to being a parent. I'm sure his mum's about a lot too. They always are.

There is one thing you can only control for so long, though, and that is time. Ronaldo is now 41, and anyone who watched Portugal at the World Cup would have been struck by the slightly awkward pathos of seeing him playing up front. It's not that he was bad, it's just he was... slow, static, no longer an elemental force of nature.

off!

The same mix of ego, stubbornness and pathological desire to work hard that made him vie with Lionel Messi for the (admittedly hugely irritating) title of Goat — greatest of all time — was working against him.

Take it from any Sunday league slogger. When your legs have gone, they've gone, just as you can only keep the lines from around your eyes for so long. At some point even a bronze caster from Madeira is going to tell you, listen... that's just how you look. You're in your forties. Time is doing its thing.

> **He is an absolute oddball — but endlessly fascinating**

So perhaps this low-key wedding is a sign that that boy who became CR7 is getting ready to exit stage left. He is, by any measure, an absolute oddball, but endlessly fascinating, and I'll miss him when he's no longer on the pitch. He has always been a person who seemed happiest when fronting up to a challenge. Score the most goals. Make the most appearances. Win the most trophies. Do the most crunches. So perhaps he has finally found the courage to tackle the biggest challenge there is. Namely, being a fortysomething man with a wife and kids. Come on, Cristiano. Let's see what you've got.

Like Lucy Davis, my secondary breast cancer metastasised

At 53, the Office star has said her illness is terminal. Lesley Stephen knows what it's like to be told that.

By Anna Maxted

In shocking, saddening news Lucy Davis, 53, the actress who quietly stole the show as the secretary Dawn in *The Office*, has announced that she has incurable breast cancer. Her stage four breast cancer was diagnosed a year and a half ago, she told followers in an Instagram post. The disease has metastasised to her bones, "specifically, to my spine, my right hip, and my ribs". She added: "It's too late for chemo."

She noted that "the initial lump... I felt wasn't a 'lump' as such, rather a kind of hard spot. Really tiny. I almost didn't bother getting it checked. So I guess I'm saying don't ignore anything — get everything checked out."

Davis doesn't wish to be treated like a sick person — humour is essential — but, she said, "the pain can really be something else. Standing and walking for too long a time can be hard," and she sometimes needs a wheelchair. Heartbreakingly, Davis, the daughter of Jasper Carrott, added that she'll see her dog Gracie, who died in 2024, again "sooner than expected", and is at peace. "I'm trying to live out whatever might be left of my life in as fun a way as I possibly can."

Her words suggest she has accepted that she doesn't have long. Lesley Stephen, from Edinburgh, who was 48 when she was diagnosed with secondary breast cancer, says: "The five-year survival rate for secondary breast cancer is about 22 per cent."

Twelve years later, now 60, Stephen is well, albeit not cancer-free.

She recalls that her main symptom was a persistent cough. "Mammograms in the UK happen at 50, so I hadn't had a mammogram," she says. "I just had a cough that wouldn't go away." With four children under 12, and being self-employed, she was "exhausted". She thought she had a chest infection.

After four months she saw her GP several times. "I was given antibiotics." Other symptoms of secondary breast cancer, listed by the charity Make 2nds Count (Stephen is a trustee), include headaches, breathlessness, stomach swelling, bone pain that isn't relieved by medication, blurred vision, loss of balance or weakness in the legs or arms, loss of appetite, and lumps or swollen areas under the arms, breasts or collarbone.

Stephen, though, had "no lumps, no discharge, no pain". She says: "I eventually got a chest x-ray, and then an urgent CT scan, which showed that my cough was [caused by] breast cancer that had already metastasised to my lungs, my liver and my bones. It was a tiny tumour that had come through my lymph nodes."

GETTY IMAGES

Lesley Stephen. Top: Lucy Davis and, below, with her father, Jasper Carrott

The diagnosis "was like you've been punched in the stomach. The grief is unbelievable." She asked, "How long have I got?" and saw that "the nurse holding my hands was in tears, which wasn't great".

Now, Stephen says of Davis: "I really feel for her. It does sound like she is resigned to the fact that she is not going to live as long as she would like to, which is absolutely the case."

Yet Stephen — a patient advocate awarded an MBE — sounds a cautious note of hope. She too had that "awful" diagnosis, a year after which the cancer metastasised into her brain — "the most frightening thing". She says: "I would never have believed, 12 years after that diagnosis, that I would still be here."

She adds: "I know many women with bone 'mets', as they call them — they're in pain, bone mets are really, really painful, but I know somebody ten years on who is still doing fine, living well. So, any message to [Davis] would be to not give up."

> **People have no idea — advanced breast cancer cannot be cured**

That said, 18 months after Stephen's diagnosis, "I was told to get my affairs in order because there were no other treatments for me." After "what I thought was a last family holiday to New York", she says, "my fantastic oncologist said, 'There is more chemotherapy for you or you can go on a trial.'" Stephen jumped at the clinical trial option and was on it for seven years. This "was very unusual, but I wouldn't be here without it".

She says: "Just having hope is really important." Stephen and Make 2nds Count subsequently launched a free service to help secondary breast cancer patients to explore the possibility of clinical trials as part of their treatment pathway.

She is grateful to Davis for raising awareness. "Most people have no idea that advanced breast cancer cannot be cured. They think, 'Oh, breast cancer, that's a good one to get.' That's not the case. A thousand women die every month of the disease. It's one of the biggest killers of women under 50, if not the biggest killer."

Many are unaware that the disease can come back. "You may know people who've had a primary breast cancer. But it can be 20 years later before it then recurs and has spread to the other organs." She cites Olivia Newton-John as an example.

"The treatments aim to control and slow down the spread of the cancer for as long as possible while hopefully giving you a higher quality of life. There are all sorts of different treatments now," Stephen says. After chemotherapy she tried (at her own vast expense) a new drug, which failed, before securing the last spot on the clinical trial. After that some cancer grew in her lungs, requiring the removal of one lobe and radiotherapy, but she says: "At the moment there is no active cancer in me."

make2ndscount.co.uk

arts

The band who saved me when I was in jail — then took me on tour

When he was locked up for fraud, Chris Atkins became addicted to the music of James. Now he's telling the veteran indie band's story in a new film

I boycotted James's music for most of my adult life. There was an irritating Mancunian on my corridor at university who was an avid fan, and he'd blare out *Laid* and *Sit Down* at all hours, so I decided I didn't like the band because I didn't like him. And I would have remained oblivious to James's work had I not been jailed for tax fraud in 2016. I had got embroiled in a dodgy tax avoidance scheme to fund a film and was locked up for two and a half years.

One of the things I missed most inside HM Prison Wandsworth in London was Spotify. The brutality of incarceration made me crave escapism in my playlists, but the only source of music was a tiny digital radio, permanently tuned to BBC Radio 6 Music. I listened to new songs constantly, something I hadn't done since my teens. Without Shazam, Google or the rewind button on BBC Sounds I rarely knew what track I was hearing, and so I had to enjoy the music in the moment. This could be exhilarating, making me savour every note as it would soon be lost for ever, but I'd get infuriated trying to work out what songs were called. I was keeping a daily diary about the insanity of my prison life, and so whenever I heard a banger, I'd scrawl a lyric in the margins: "We're gonna miss you when you're gone... Do everything you fear... Getting away with it".

I completely forgot about this analogue archive until I was at open prison a year later. HMP Spring Hill in Buckinghamshire allowed me out on day release to study psychology at Oxford Brookes University, where I started going through my Wandsworth diary. Peeling back the coffee-encrusted sheets of A4 paper, I discovered these fragments of the songs that had touched me all those months before. I was finally able to google these mystery lyrics — and discovered many of the tracks were by the Nineties band James.

I reluctantly conceded that I'd rashly misjudged them 25 years previously, and atoned for the slight by listening to their entire back catalogue. This took several days, as they were still churning out excellent new music and at that point had chalked up 16 albums. I sat reeling. Now reunited with Spotify, I instinctively started saving tracks out of some latent fear I'd never hear them again, and formed an epic playlist of all the James songs that stirred my soul. It ended up being more than seven hours long.

Chris Atkins, centre, with Jim Glennie and Tim Booth of James. Main: Booth at Glastonbury in 2024. Right: James in 1987

Prison is so chaotic it makes you cling to rigid routines, and this epic James playlist became the foundation of my day. I'd put it on at 8.15am when I entered the library and played the entire thing while I typed up my prison diary. And I did this most days for nearly a year. Far from being a distraction, James's songs unleashed a creative flow state where I'd completely lose track of time as I edited down my mountains of scrawled notes. Reading it back I'd sometimes get triggered by a traumatic prison experience I'd long suppressed, but there was always a James song to scoop me up. I'd wanted to be a writer for years but self-doubt had always crushed any previous efforts. Thanks to James — and nine mad months in Wandsworth — I was finally able to write something worth reading.

I left prison in 2019 and published my book *A Bit of a Stretch*. I celebrated by seeing my new favourite band at Wembley Arena. James live were unlike anything I'd ever seen before. Their talismanic lead singer, Tim Booth, spent half the gig in the audience, duetting with delighted fans, while the rest of the group exploded in anarchic energy.

Around the same time, I stumbled into directing music documentaries. After I released *Who Killed the KLF?*

> **My epic prison playlist became the foundation of my day**

in 2021, one of the first people to see it was James Blunt, who promptly asked me to make a documentary. *James Blunt: One Brit Wonder* also did well, and my long-suffering producer Ian Neil asked who we should look at next. I was by now completely obsessed with James. The 1980s and 1990s Madchester scene has been overly covered in documentaries, but nobody had turned the camera on James — and it turned out that they had the craziest story of them all.

I sent my prison book to Tim Booth and Jim Glennie, who'd formed James in the Mancunian postpunk scene in 1982. I explained how I'd inadvertently become a superfan while doing time, which seemed to strike a chord with them. They sat down for some extraordinarily frank interviews and revealed how they'd joined a cult in 1984 which forced them to meditate for 12 hours a day, leading them to turn down a breakthrough US tour with the Smiths. They developed a unique form of group improvisation in a Moss Side scout hut, playing unspoken for hours and forging songs from their mistakes.

But at the same time they refused to learn their instruments and initially wouldn't record their songs, even foolishly shunning the great Factory Records. The band were riven with infighting, underwent medical experiments to pay the bills and hired their drummer on the advice of a psychic. I stopped wondering why it took them so long to achieve fame and started wondering how they lasted more than five minutes.

I joined them on the road as they embarked on a chaotic tour to celebrate their 40th anniversary. James rarely plan anything in advance, and whenever they do it soon gets binned anyway. This creates breathtakingly unique performances but makes the band a nightmare to film. Before gigs I kept foolishly asking what songs they were planning to perform, which was just met with baffled laughter.

They were given the rare honour of playing at the Acropolis in Athens,

JIM DYSON/GETTY IMAGES; STEPHEN WRIGHT/GETTY IMAGES

which I madly agreed to film with a 16-camera shoot. Given the fragility of the ancient amphitheatre, every detail of the show had to be preapproved in writing by unsmiling Greek architects, which was challenging for a band who have never stuck to a setlist in four decades.

Half the equipment failed in a heatwave, the filming crew barely spoke English and we were threatened with arrest for flying a drone. God only knows how we got away with it. I have worse nightmares from the production than I do from Wandsworth clink. But it was the show of a lifetime.

James have always turned left instead of right but this joyous bloody-mindedness has enabled them to carry on, in my view, now at the height of their powers. Their religiously dedicated fanbase would follow them to the moon. The best I can explain it is that somehow their beautiful anarchy makes you leap into the unknown with them.

***James: Getting Away with It* is screening in cinemas across the UK on Monday, including a live performance from the Manchester premiere and band interview with Gary Neville streamed to every cinema**

Dumbing down classical music? No, I'm breaking down barriers

The Radio 3 presenter Georgia Mann explains why listeners need a new approach — including DJ sets

How likely is it that Shy FX's drum'n'bass soundcheck will drown out my 15th-century polyphony? How do I prevent Joe Wicks's mass workout being louder than my Bach transcription? Am I likely to be stung by a wasp while trying to "drop the beat" in my Janacek? These are all questions I've asked myself while in the role of classical DJ.

That job title may sound like the biggest oxymoron in musical history, but while I can't claim Fatboy Slim levels of adulation just yet, the reaction I've had to DJ sets taking in Bach, Stravinsky and Anna Meredith suggests a sizeable shift in how people want to experience classical music.

My day job is presenting BBC Radio 3's *Essential Classics*, and I can discern from correspondence to the show that a new, classically curious listener is emerging. Recent research has revealed a youth surge in classical music streaming: listeners under 35 account for more than a third of global classical streamers.

Not everyone is a fan of my way of talking about classical music, which I would class as irreverent and conversational. I tend to focus more on biographical details than musicological ones — for example, I find it more interesting to talk about Beethoven's bowel problems than his treatment of the sonata form. I also try to cut down on the endless key signatures and opus numbers that are part and parcel of classical music's naming conventions. Thankfully, those details are available online these days, as they often take a painfully long time to get out of one's mouth on the radio.

This has irritated some. An editor at The Spectator accused me on X of talking drivel. The Daily Telegraph recently printed a piece with the headline "Has Radio 3 really dumbed down?" with a large photo of my face beneath it. I've framed it and hung it in my loo.

But how can we break down the barriers for those who love the sound of a Beethoven piano sonata but have no idea who poor old Ludwig was? Enter the Classical DJ project. It's a joint venture between me and a sound engineer called Rob Winter. Winter can actually use a pair of decks whereas I struggle with plugging in a pair of headphones. Together we create seamless sequences of classical tunes, with me doing some minimal chat over the top so that audiences get a sense of the people and places that shaped the music they're hearing.

Some of the most surreal and heart-warming moments of my life date from our Glastonbury Classical DJ sets. I admit that I nearly lost it as we reached the point in the set where we were playing the Icelandic pianist Vikingur Olafsson performing a searing transcription of Bach's Organ Sonata No 4. Suddenly, cutting through the Bach, came the sound of Wicks screaming at several hundred gym bunnies just down the hill from us to "Come on, keep pushing!" as part of a mass workout.

> **"One couple, nearly naked, listened in ecstasy**

Every great DJ set needs to give you a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself, and the classical domain really lends itself to group transcendence. At all our classical sets so far we've played Steve Reich's *Music for 18 Musicians*. I always encourage the crowd to close their eyes and listen for what Reich describes as "pulses" in the music. I'll never forget one couple at Glastonbury listening with ecstatic expressions on their faces, eyes closed while standing up, both nearly naked and sweating copiously (I'm sure it must have been the music?). It felt miraculous when we segued from the Reich to Handel's *Eternal Source of Light Divine* just as the clouds cleared to reveal the Pyramid Stage in the distance, accompanied by the increasingly pungent aroma of a nearby noodle bar.

Georgia Mann, also below, and Rob Winter at one of their Classical DJ events

More is on its way. In September we're inviting everyone to join us for a Hallelujah House Party, combining the baroque brilliance of Handel with Jimi Hendrix at the address where both men resided, two centuries apart, on Brook Street in London: Handel Hendrix House. We're marking 25 years of their house being open to the public by filling every room with a live DJ set, bringing the place alive with Handel's and Hendrix's music across three days. Imagine *Eternal Source of Light Divine* blending psychedelically into *Hey Joe* while everyone eats, drinks and makes merry in the style of Handel in the 1700s and Hendrix in the late 1960s.

Our next gigs involve us dropping some Jacobean-era tunes at Banqueting House in Whitehall while everyone lies back and looks up at the newly restored Rubens ceiling. This is the space in which some serious debauchery took place, so we're bringing back the party by playing the music that soundtracked James I's version of a rave, the masque. As you look up at Rubens's heavenly beings cavorting above, expect to hear 17th-century bangers like Henry Purcell's *Bell Anthem*.

When I first visited Banqueting House and gazed at the central ceiling panel of James I arriving in the celestial realm, I couldn't help experiencing a brief internal reprise of that 1998 Faithless classic *God Is a DJ*. See you on the dancefloor?

Classical DJ at Banqueting House, London, is on Sat and Sun. The Hallelujah House Party is at Handel Hendrix House, London, Sep 18-20

Your weekday brain boost

More puzzles Pages 14-16

Every day, Monday to Thursday, a page of extra puzzles to give your brain an extended workout

Samurai medium

Fill each grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Where the puzzles overlap, the rows and columns do not go beyond their usual length.

	7	6		1												2	5	9		
		1	6	3		9								1		4				6
3						1		8				9					1		4	
		4			9	6	1						4			5		1	3	
9			7	5	6			3				1	5		6		3		2	4
	5	2	1			7							2	3		7			6	
2		3									6				8					5
		7		9	5			6								3		6		
				6					2		5			4	5	1				
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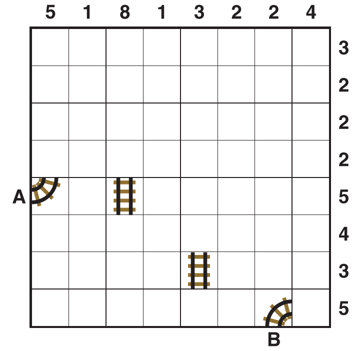
	9	4		8			6						1	7	9			6		
	8		2					6				5		3						2
3				9		5								8		2	6	9		
		6	7	5												3		1	8	

Sudoku difficult

				5	6			8
			4	2		9		
		5	2		3			9
	6	8						
	1		8				2	5
		9				7	3	6
					9	5		
	8		1		7	2		

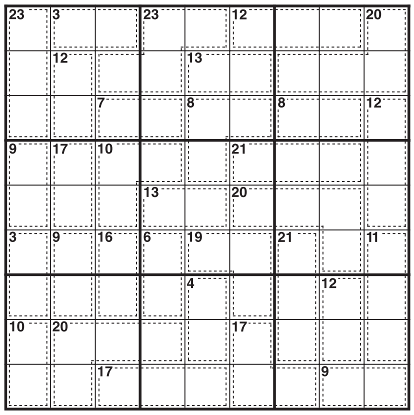
Train Tracks

Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.



Killer deadly

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

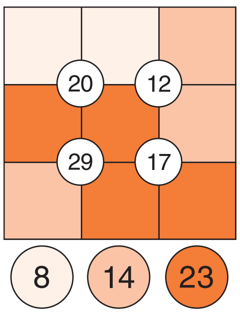


Futoshiki

Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

□	<	□	<	□		3		□
								∧
□		□	>	□		□		□
□		□		□		□		□
∧						∧		
□		□	>	□		□		3
∨								
3		□		□	>	□	>	□

Sakuro



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

Play Mini Sudoku every day Monday-Sunday online at thetimes.com and on Live app

Codeword

Every letter in the crossword-style grid, right, is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded.

12	21	25	19	■	9	3	6	1 Y	2	3	11	14
21	■	3	■	23	■	24	■	3	■	8	■	19
17	3	21	5	7	18	1	■	16	8	8	19	11
23	■	18 L	■	3	■	20	■	11	■	11	■	9
10	11	19	23	13	■	19	5	22	16	19	6	■
14	■	■	■	21	■	5	■	■	■	22	■	19
19	24	8	19	10	7	■	16	5	21	22	19	24
11	■	3	■	■	■	23	■	19	■	■	■	8
■	9	23	26	23	23	11	■	20 G	16	22	7	3
15	■	10	■	8	■	7	■	23	■	18	■	11
16	22	12	19	11	■	4	23	7	7	19	22	7
23	■	19	■	3	■	16	■	19	■	19	■	19
6	23	11	21	5	20	18	1	■	22	8	16	11

A B C D E F ~~G~~ H I J K ~~L~~ M N O P Q R S T U V W X ~~Y~~ Z

1 Y	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18 L	19	20 G	21	22	23	24	25	26

Mini Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x2 box contains the digits 1 to 6

4					6
		6	4		
	2			3	
	6			4	
		3	5		
6					3

Solutions in Monday's Times2

Yesterday's solutions

SAMURAI

6	4	3	7	9	5	2	1	8				6	1	8	5	7	9	3	2	4
2	1	8	3	6	4	7	5	9				2	5	7	4	3	6	8	9	1
5	7	9	2	1	8	3	6	4				4	9	3	8	2	1	7	6	5
8	9	1	5	2	6	4	7	3				8	6	5	3	1	2	9	4	7
7	6	5	9	4	3	1	8	2				9	3	2	7	4	8	5	1	6
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3	8	6	4	7	1	9	2	5	1	4	7	3	8	6	9	5	4	1	7	2
						3	8	9	7	5	1	4	6	2						
						5	1	4	2	6	8	9	7	3						
						2	7	6	4	9	3	1	5	8						
8	3	4	5	6	7	1	9	2	5	8	4	6	3	7	2	4	8	9	1	5
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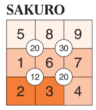
3	9	7	6	8	1	5	2	4				3	4	8	5	1	9	7	2	6
5	4	6	2	7	3	9	8	1				1	2	9	8	6	7	4	5	3
1	2	8	4	5	9	3	7	6				5	7	6	4	3	2	8	9	1
4	8	5	1	9	6	2	3	7				9	6	1	7	8	5	2	3	4
6	7	2	3	4	5	8	1	9				7	5	3	6	2	4	1	8	9
9	1	3	7	2	8	6	4	5				4	8	2	3	9	1	5	6	7

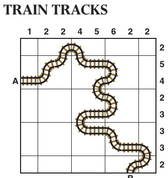
SAKURO



MINI SUDOKU

5	6	2	4	3	1
1	3	4	6	2	5
3	1	5	2	4	6
4	2	6	5	1	3
6	4	1	3	5	2
2	5	3	1	6	4

TRAIN TRACKS



FUTOSHIKI

4		5		1		3	>	2
		∨		∧				
1		3		2		5	>	4
∧				∧				
5		1		4		2		3
						∨		∧
2		4	>	3		1		5
		∨						
3		2		5		4	>	1

SUDOKU

4	8	3	6	5	1	2	7	9
5	9	2	8	3	7	1	6	4
1	7	6	9	4	2	3	8	5
2	3	7	4	1	5	6	9	8
9	6	4	3	7	8	5	2	1
8	1	5	2	9	6	4	3	7
3	2	1	5	8	9	7	4	6
7	4	8	1	6	3	9	5	2
6	5	9	7	2	4	8	1	3

KILLER

7	4	3	9	1	6	8	5	2
6	5	9	8	2	4	1	3	7
1	8	2	7	5	3	9	4	6
3	1	5	6	9	8	7	2	4
9	6	4	1	7	2	5	8	3
8	2	7	4	3	5	6	9	1
4	9	1	2	8	7	3	6	5
2	3	8	5	6	1	4	7	9
5	7	6	3	4	9	2	1	8

CODEWORD

■	A	S	C	R	I	B	E	■	F	L	E	A
A	■	A	■	■	■	R	■	S	■	I	■	P
B	R	U	S	Q	U	E	■	L	A	N	C	E
E	■	N	■	U	■	E	■	A	■	C	■	X
T	I	A	R	A	■	Z	E	N	I	T	H	■
T	■	■	■	R	■	E	■	D	■	U	■	S
E	N	D	U	R	E	■	B	E	D	S	I	T
D	■	I	■	E	■	A	■	R	■	■	■	A
■	A	S	Y	L	U	M	■	O	W	I	N	G
T	■	A	■	L	■	U	■	U	■	C	■	I
R	E	V	U	E	■	S	E	S	S	I	O	N
E	■	O	■	D	■	E	■	■	■	N	■	G
K	I	W	I	■	A	D	J	U	D	G	E	■

A fascinating, powerful piece of true crime theatre

Carol Midgley TV review

Murder Trial
BBC2
★★★★☆

Courtroom documentaries are rarely like the melodramatic court scenes that we see in TV dramas. Invariably they are more gripping — pieces of true crime theatre.

Murder Trial: Death of a Dog Walker was no exception and also offered the viewer a helpful tutorial on how *not* to behave in a police interview if you are accused of murder. The No 1 lesson: try not to be arrogant. Or creepy around female detectives.

David Campbell did himself no favours in this respect. The police interview video showed Campbell, suspected of shooting dead Brian Low in a remote lane in Aberfeldy, Scotland, being supercilious and patronising, saying of the female officer in the room: "I like the company of attractive ladies." The male officer advised him she would be "crawling out of her skin". This is a public service to the rest of us should we be in this position. Be the opposite.

Worse, while watching this recording from the dock, Campbell, a former gamekeeper, seemed to laugh at his behaviour. This was fascinating. The film used no gimmicks because there was no need. Courts are operettas of human psychology.

But the prosecution case against Campbell wasn't overwhelming, with little forensic evidence. The murder weapon was never found. Much of this state of affairs could be laid at the feet of the police, who committed an almighty blunder on the day Low's body was found in 2024.

One of the first officers on the scene said he saw the body and assumed he had fallen while out for a walk. The death was treated as unsuspicious for several days, with the loss of possibly vital evidence, until a shotgun pellet literally fell out of the body bag during preparations for a post-mortem examination, a detail that beggars belief. If that happened in a drama I'd knock off a star for being far-fetched.

This documentary (both episodes are available) was possible because

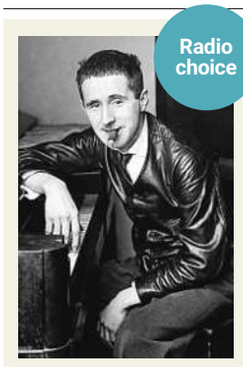
FIRECREST FILMS/BBC

David Campbell during his trial for the murder of Brian Low

Scotland allows cameras in court when it is deemed in the public interest (obviously you don't see the jury). I am not sure I'd want to have a lens on me when I was giving evidence, whether as a witness or the accused, one of the most stressful moments of your life. I felt for Pamela, Low's grieving partner of 23 years, being cross-examined about contradictions in her statement to police on the day he was found when she was in a profound state of shock. Then again it is good to demystify the court process, for justice to be seen to be done. Here we saw how juries have to look at separate pieces of evidence and see if it convinces them as a whole.

There had been bad feeling between Campbell, 77, and Low, 65, a groundsman. On the day of the murder Campbell had tampered with his CCTV and Ring doorbell, which is strange behaviour, and had changed the tyres on his wife's bicycle. He had also made idle threats to shoot people in the past.

The moment when the jury came back and delivered their verdict (and we'll allow the second part to reveal this to those who don't know it) packed more suspense than any potboiler. There were no shouts in court, no outbursts of anger, just an old man shuffling off, and it was more powerful than any stage play.



Radio choice

Great Lives
Radio 4 Extra, 10am

Marking tomorrow's 70th anniversary of the death of the German theatre creator and writer Bertolt Brecht, *above*, the playwright John Godber joins Matthew Parris in a lively edition of the series to nominate him as one of his greatest inspirations. Both men shared a desire to bring theatre to people outside the usual cultural bubble and to make life's normalities seem like art. They are joined by Professor Michael Patterson, an expert in German theatre, and discuss how Brecht's work is cheerful and entertaining, with the writer even writing for Hollywood after fleeing Nazi Germany in 1933. ***Clair Woodward***

Times Radio

Digital, web, smart speaker, app

5.00am Tom Nunan **6.00** Salma El-Wardany and Stig Abell **10.00** Hugo Rifkind **1.00pm** Stephen Sackur **2.00** Fi Glover and Roya Nikkhah **4.00** Sebastian Payne with Drive **7.00** Albie Amankona **10.00** Henry Bonsu **1.00am** The Best of Times Radio

Radio 2

FM: 88-90.2 MHz

6.30am Sara Cox **9.30** Vernon Kay **11.25** Piano Room **12.00** Jeremy Vine **2.00pm** Clara Amfo **4.00** Joel Dommett **7.00** Edith Bowman **8.45** Piano Room **9.00** Country Show **10.00** The Good Groove **12.00** OJ Borg **3.00am** Dance Sounds of the 90s (r) **4.00** Owain Wyn Evans

Radio 3

FM: 90.2-92.4 MHz

6.30am Breakfast
9.30 Essential Classics
1.00pm Classical Live
BBC Proms — Liszt (*Mephisto Waltz No 1*); Copenhagen Festival & Friends, Smetana (Piano Trio in G minor, Op 15); Granada Festival — Monteverdi (*O Teseo, Teseo mio, Lamento d'Arianna*, SV 107, *Madrigales, Libro VI*. 1614); Verbier Festival — Debussy (Violin Sonata); Finzi (*Eclogue*); BBC Proms — Vivaldi arr. Rhian Davies and Ellen O'Brien (*The Four Seasons* excerpts); Florence Price arr. Rhian Davies (Symphony No 1, *Juba Dance*, 3rd mvt); Oliver Cross arr. Liam Taylor-West (*Barriers*); Michael Betteridge arr. Julia Koelmans (*Soaring Through Sparks* — Clarion Concerto); Charlotte Harding (arr. Liam Taylor-West) (*The Orchestra — A Young Person's Guide*); and Berg (Violin Concerto)
4.00 Composer of the Week: Montgeroult (1764-1836) Donald Macleod explores Hélène's private life (r)
5.00 In Tune
7.00 Live BBC Proms 2026
The BBC Symphony Orchestra conductor James Gaffigan plays Wynton Marsalis and Barber, and with soloist Yeol Eum Son, Gershwin's charismatic Piano Concerto. Live from the Royal Albert Hall. Wynton Marsalis (Concerto for Orchestra — BBC co-commission: UK premiere); Gershwin (Piano Concerto in F); and Barber (Symphony No. 1 in One movement)
10.00 Night Tracks
11.30 'Round Midnight
12.30am Through the Night (r)

Radio 4

FM: 92.4-94.6 MHz

5.00am News Summary
5.04 Sideways (5/8) (r)
5.34 Shipping Forecast
5.43 Prayer for the Day
5.45 Farming Today
6.00 Today
9.00 Natalie Haynes
Stands Up for the Classics
A guide on using the Oracle to answer life's big questions (3/7)
9.30 The Guitar Story
Exploring how the instrument has driven cultural change (2/4)
10.00 Woman's Hour
Anita Rani presents the magazine
11.00 The Three Ages of Child
Guddi Singh looks at mental health in adolescence (3/3) (r)
11.45 Book of the Week:
Hiroshima, 8.15: The Lost Memoir
Written by Kiyoshi Tanimoto and Koko Kondo (4/5)
12.04pm Scam Secrets (3/8)
12.32 Sliced Bread (7/8)
1.00 The World at One
1.45 Human Intelligence
The mind of China's greatest female poet — Li Qingzhao
2.00 The Archers (r)
2.15 Drama: Security
By Kelly Jones
3.00 This Natural Life
Phoebe Smith shows Martha Kearney one of her favourite places. Last in the series
3.27 Radio 4 Appeal (r)
3.30 Feedback
4.00 The Briefing Room
4.30 BBC Inside Science
5.00 PM
6.00 Six O'Clock News
6.30 Icklewick FM
The radio team are on scene at the Agricultural Festival (3/6) (r)
7.00 The Archers
David is offered a choice
7.15 Front Row
Arts programme
8.00 At Your Own Peril
The history of risk (4/5) (r)
8.15 The Media Show
The latest news (r)
9.00 Loose Ends
Stuart Maconie presents from Belfast as the city hosts Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (r)
9.45 The Cows Are Mad
A mother embarks on a quest for answers (6/10) (r)
10.00 The World Tonight
10.45 Book at Bedtime:
The Vicar of Wakefield
By Oliver Goldsmith (9/10)
11.00 Radical
The forces reshaping the world
11.30 A Good Read
Sophie Raworth and Patrick Ness talk about books (7/9) (r)
12.00 News and Weather
12.30am Book of the Week:
Hiroshima, 8.15:
The Lost Memoir (4/5) (r)
12.48 Shipping Forecast
1.00 As BBC World Service

Radio 4 Extra

Digital only

8.00am The Train at Platform 4
8.30 Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **8.45** Small Island **9.00** Icklewick FM **9.30** Following the Martian Invasion **9.45** Daily Service **10.00** Choice Great Lives **10.30** From Ivory To Plastic **11.00** The Wolf Far Hence **11.30** The Senior Partner **12.00** Capital Gains **12.30pm** The Burkiss Way **1.00** The Train at Platform 4 **1.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **1.45** Small Island **2.00** Dilemma **2.30** The Change **3.00** The Summer Book **3.45** Short Works **4.00** Great Lives **4.30** From Ivory To Plastic **5.00** The Wolf Far Hence **5.30** The Senior Partner **6.00** Capital Gains **6.30** The Burkiss Way **7.00** The Train at Platform 4 **7.30** Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years **7.45** Small Island **8.00** Dilemma **8.30** Change **9.00** The Summer Book **9.45** Short Works **10.00** Comedy Club: Icklewick FM **10.30** A Look Back at the Nineties **10.55** The Comedy Club Interview **11.00** Casebook of Max and Ivan **11.30** Sophie Willan's Guide to Normality **11.45** What's the Story, Ashley Storrie?

Radio 5 Live

MW: 693, 909

5.00am Wake Up to Money **6.00** Breakfast **9.00** Nicky Campbell **11.00** Gordon Smart **2.00pm** Matt Chorley **4.00** Drive **7.00** 5 Live Sport **7.30** Athletics. Coverage from Birmingham **10.00** Johnny I'Anson **1.00am** Charlie Taylor

talkSPORT

MW: 1053, 1089 kHz

5.00am Early Sports Breakfast **6.00** Breakfast with Jeff Stelling **10.00** Shebahn Aherne & Steve Bruce **1.00pm** Hawksbee and Baker **4.00** Drive **7.00** Transfer Insiders **10.00** The Sports Bar **1.00am** Extra Time with Paul Ross

Talk

Digital only

6.00am Ian Collins **10.00** Julia Hartley Brewer **1.00pm** David Bull **4.00** Kevin O'Sullivan **7.00** Peter Cardwell **10.00** Andre Walker ft. Ash **1.00am** Paul Ross

6 Music

Digital only

5.00am Chris Hawkins **7.00** Nick Grimshaw **10.00** Lauren Laverne. With James Ellis Ford **1.00pm** Craig Charles **4.00** Huw Stephens **7.00** New Music Fix Daily **9.00** Riley & Coe **11.00** 6 Music Artist in Residence: Wolf Alice **12.00** New Music Fix Playlist **1.00am** New Album Fix **2.00** 6 Music's Jukebox **3.00** 6 Music's 90s Forever **4.00** 6 Music's 00s Forever

Virgin Radio

Digital only

6.30am The Chris Evans Breakfast Show **10.00** Emma B **2.00pm** Ben Jones **6.00** Geoff Lloyd **10.00** Goldierocks **2.00am** Steve Denyer

Classic FM

FM: 100-102 MHz

6.30am Breakfast with Tim Lihoreau **9.00** The Hall of Fame Hour **10.00** Aled Jones **1.00pm** Anne-Marie Minhall **4.00** Margherita Taylor **7.00** Relaxing Evenings with John Brunning **9.00** Classic FM's Composer Carousel With John Brunning **10.00** Calm Classics **1.00am** Bill Overton **4.00** Early Breakfast

television

PICKS OF THE DAY

A House Through Time
BBC2, 9pm

After shuttling between London and Berlin in its previous run, David Olusoga's series returns with a four-parter exploring a house in Edinburgh. Built in 1765, just before construction of the New Town began, it looks down on the Scottish capital from Calton Hill, and was home to the aspirational middle class rather than the elite. Once again drawn to how political, economic and social developments shaped individual lives, the historian looks initially at residents — a priest who helped French prisoners to escape from Edinburgh Castle, an agent spying on striking weavers — who took sides for or against radical movements in the 1780s and 90s. Also in the spotlight are the Steells, a father and son who exploited their craft skills in different ways; John as a useless businessman, John Jr as a famous sculptor. **John Dugdale**

David Olusoga (BBC2, 9pm)

The Big Deal with Steph McGovern
BBC2, 8pm

Evangelical about demystifying the art trade and opening it up to outsiders, Steph McGovern hosts a six-part contest (prize: art worth £50,000) in which seven amateur duos have a go at flogging paintings. Also guided by "the overarching series expert" Cordelia de Freitas and her one-off sidekicks, the wannabes' first challenge is to pick four works with commercial potential at a graduation show. Then they must coax the student artists into having know-nothing dealers (this feels phoney) before spouting art tosh at the auction preview, and hoping they have chosen the right pieces and the right "reserve" for each one at the sale. Slightly comically, part one ends with a glorified version of a daytime antiques show's climax; the prices are higher, but there are the same close-ups of presenter and glum or gleeful contestants as the bids come in (or don't). **JD**

BBC1

6.00am Breakfast
9.30 Animal Park (r) (AD)
10.00 Trace, Track, Get My Car Back (r)
10.30 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026. Jeanette Kwakye presents coverage of the opening session on day four, including the women's 800m and 400m semi-finals
1.15pm BBC News at One; Weather
1.40 BBC Regional News; Weather
1.50 BBC News at One; Weather
2.00 Money for Nothing. Sarah Moore searches Witley recycling centre in Surrey
2.45 Escape to the Country. A couple are searching for a new home in either Worcestershire or Warwickshire (r) (AD)
3.30 The Repair Shop. Experts restore a vintage rugby shirt, a serving plate, a map and an accordion (r) (AD)
4.30 The Answer Run. Jason Manford hosts
5.15 Pointless. Quiz show (r)
6.00 BBC News at Six; Weather
6.30 BBC Regional News; Weather

7.00 The One Show Presented by Alex Jones and Roman Kemp

7.30 EastEnders Amy confides in an unlikely source, and Nicola and Eve bond. Meanwhile, Ian finds himself in a worrying situation (AD)

8.00 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Gabby Logan presents further coverage of the evening session on day four from Alexander Stadium, including the women's 200m final. The decathlon also concludes with the 1500m, and medals are awarded in the women's triple jump, pole vault and 3,000m, and the men's discus and 800m. With analysis from Greg Rutherford and Jessica Ennis-Hill, and commentary by Steve Cram, Steve Backley, Andrew Cotter, Colin Jackson and Paula Radcliffe

10.00 BBC News at Ten

10.30 BBC Regional News and Weather

10.40 FILM: Yesterday (12, 2019) Jack, a struggling musician, gets hit by a bus during a mysterious event. When he regains consciousness, he finds that he is the only person who can remember the Beatles, and sets out to exploit the opportunity by passing their hits off as his own compositions. Comedy with Himesh Patel and Lily James. Directed by Danny Boyle. *See film choice* (AD)

12.30am Alan Carr's Picture Slam Alan Carr hosts this game show in which contestants have to identify a board full of images, with a chance of winning up to £10,000. Playing this time are friends from Coventry, siblings from London, and a father and son from Glasgow (r) **1.20-6.00** BBC News

BBC2

6.30am The Bidding Room (r)
7.15 Money for Nothing (r)
8.00 Sign Zone: Gardeners' World (r) (AD, SL)
9.00 BBC News
10.30 Antiques Road Trip (r)
11.15 Homes Under the Hammer (r) (AD)
12.15pm Bargain Hunt (r)
1.00 Richard Osman's House of Games (r)
1.30 The Finish Line. Quiz (r)
2.15 Do You Know Your Place? Bristol (r)
2.45 The Great Rift: Africa's Wild Heart. The creation of the Great Rift Valley (r) (AD)
3.35 Spy in the Ocean. The challenges that ocean life must overcome (4/4) (r) (AD)
4.35 Vintage Antiques Roadshow. From Dunrobin Castle in Scotland (r)
5.15 Flog It! From Barnard Castle (r)
6.00 Richard Osman's House of Games. Chris Bisson, Danielle Harold, Katharine Merry and Robert Webb take part (r)
6.30 Bear Grylls: Wild Reckoning. A woman who wants to mend her fractured relationship with her daughter (r) (AD)

7.00 Live European Athletics Championships: Birmingham 2026 Coverage of the evening session on day four from Alexander Stadium, including the start of the women's triple jump and pole vault finals. Coverage continues on BBC1

8.00 The Big Deal with Steph McGovern New series. Steph McGovern hosts as aspiring art dealers compete to spot talent, negotiate deals and make a profit for the chance to win £50,000 worth of British art. *See picks of the day* (1/6) (AD)

9.00 A House Through Time New series. David Olusoga charts more British history as lived through by the successive inhabitants of a house, this time a property in Edinburgh. *See picks of the day* (1/4) (AD)

10.00 Red Dwarf Rimmer tries desperately to be transferred to a ship that is crewed by holograms (1/6) (r)

10.30 Newsnight Headline analysis presented by Katie Razzall

11.05 Murder Trial Former gamekeeper David Campbell stands accused of the premeditated murder of Brian Low, a 65-year-old groundsman on the same estate where they both worked (1/2) (r) (AD)

12.05am The Devil in the Family: The Fall of Ruby Franke With the Franke family isolated, outsiders try to find out what is happening. Last in the series (r) (AD) **12.55** Sign Zone: Ambulance. A man falls 20ft off a ladder on to concrete. Last in the series (r) (AD, SL) **1.55-2.55** Evolution (r) (AD, SL)

ITV1

6.00am Good Morning Britain
10.00 This Morning
1.30pm ITV News; Weather
2.00 Dickinson's Real Deal. Newcastle Racecourse plays host, where a couple of pistols catch Helen Gardiner's eye, and Henry Nicholls splashes out on a rare Christmas single (r) (AD)
3.00 Deal or No Deal. Stephen Mulhern hosts as a contestant tries to open the 22 red boxes in the right order, taking on the infamous Banker for the chance to win a life-changing cash prize (r) (AD)
4.00 Tipping Point. Ben Shephard hosts the arcade-themed quiz in which contestants drop tokens down a choice of four chutes in the hope of winning a £10,000 jackpot (r)
5.00 The Chase. Bradley Walsh hosts as contestants from Northampton, Doncaster, Manchester and Luton pit their wits against one of the ruthless experts (r)
6.00 Regional News; Weather
6.30 ITV News; Weather

7.30 Tom Kerridge Cooks Italy Tom explores Italy's mountains, uncovering the culinary secrets of chestnuts and pasta (5/6) (AD)

8.00 Emmerdale Kev is thrilled, Billy is in a determined mood and Dylan admits to April he has been struggling (AD)

8.30 Coronation Street Tim takes in Richie's daughter Lucy without consulting Sally (AD)

9.00 The Chase Around the World The teams land in Zurich to take on the Governess and the Dark Destroyer. Players must solve questions to navigate the city and find Bradley Walsh at the finish line (5/6) (AD)

10.00 ITV News at Ten; Weather; followed by Regional News

10.45 FILM: Quantum of Solace (12, 2008) James Bond sets out on a personal mission of vengeance and uncovers a plan to cause a coup in a Latin American country. Spy thriller sequel starring Daniel Craig, Olga Kurylenko, Judi Dench, Gemma Arterton and Mathieu Amalric (AD)

12.35am Shop on TV 3.00 The Summit. The Mountain's Keeper gives one of the group the tough decision to choose someone to leave the mountain, while tensions increase when they must camp in the wild (r) (AD, SL) **3.50** Unwind with ITV **5.05-6.00** Deal or No Deal: Celebrity Special (r) (AD, SL)

Channel 4

6.30am The King of Queens (r) (AD)
7.45 Everybody Loves Raymond (r) (AD)
9.10 Frasier (r) (AD)
11.10 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA (r)
12.05pm Channel 4 News Summary
12.10 Find It, Fix It, Flog It (r) (AD)
1.10 The Great House Giveaway. A property valuer and a teaching assistant buy a house together in Merseyside (r)
2.10 Countdown. With Pauline McLynn
3.00 A Place in the Sun. Jasmine Harman helps a couple find a holiday home in the countryside of Murcia, Spain (r)
4.00 Saving Country Houses with Penelope Keith. In Northamptonshire, Nova Guest has decided to get to grips with Ashby Manor's expansive parkland (r) (AD)
5.00 Château DIY. At the impressive Château Trois Cloches, work begins on the hotel-style bedroom and bathroom (r) (AD)
6.00 American Pickers. Ploughing through a 40-acre salvage yard, Mike Wolfe and Frank Fritz harvest a few lost treasures (r) (AD)

7.00 Channel 4 News

8.00 Renovation Rescue Vogue Williams and Luke Mabbott help a widow finally breathe new life into her beloved family home that holds so many precious memories (AD)

9.00 Spy Next Door: The Anna Chapman Story The FBI reveals that Anna Chapman is just one of a sprawling web of Russian agents on the loose in the United States (2/2) (AD)

10.00 The Schoolgirl Terrorist? Examining the events that led to Rhianan Rudd becoming the youngest girl to be charged with terror offences in the UK in 2020 at just 15-years-old (AD)

11.05 Social Media Monsters How a stalker sought revenge on her former boss, using LinkedIn, Instagram and X to ruin her reputation. When the campaign of harassment failed to yield results, she turned her attention to other targets (2/10) (r) (AD)

12.10am Crime Scene Cleaners (r) (AD, SL) **1.05** Secret Lives of Gypsy Wives (r) (AD, SL) **1.55** Ramsay's Hotel Hell (r) (AD, SL) **2.45** Dictator: The Hitler Interviews (r) (AD, SL) **3.40** Fur Babies (r) (AD, SL) **4.35** Kirstie's House of Craft (r) **4.55** Couples Come Dine with Me (r) **5.50-6.30** Countdown (r)

5

6.00am Milkshake!
9.15 Jeremy Vine
11.30 Storm & Alexis
12.45pm 5 News at Lunchtime
12.50 Matt Allwright
2.20 FILM: The Replacement Daughter (PG, TVM, 2024) When Jessica's mother is struck by a hit-and-run, she falls into the care of a wealthy woman, but not everything is what it seems. Thriller starring Stacy Haiduk
4.00 Castle. Beckett and Castle are faced with a long list of possible suspects when a personal injury attorney is murdered; and a shocking secret deepens the mystery surrounding Richie's death (r)
4.55 Love Nature. A red kite feeding centre in the heart of mid-Wales (r)
5.00 5 News with Dan Walker
6.00 Crete: Jewel of the Med. Joanna Lumley narrates this exploration of the largest of the Greek Islands, taking in turtle-nesting sites, cuisine and culture (r)
6.55 5 News Update

7.00 Around the World in First Class Josie Gibson heads for the tourist hotspots of Finland and Sweden, explores Stockholm, and enjoys a helicopter trip over an archipelago

7.55 5 News Update

8.00 The Yorkshire Vet Special: Peter's Dream New series. Cameras follow Peter Wright as he creates a Yorkshire pet memorial garden, inspired by Sussex's pet chaplain and church. *See picks of the day*

9.00 Benidorm Is Murder At her hen party, maid of honour Megan humiliates shy bride Leona and their friends before revealing a luxury villa. When they reject her plans, she storms off alone. By morning, a murder shocks the resort. Crime drama starring John Hannah (3/6) (AD)

10.00 Killer at the Crime Scene Investigating the death of spa owner Ildiko Krajnyak, who was killed in a explosion at her beauty spa in Orange County, California (r)

11.05 The Body in the Thames The story of Adam — the unknown boy whose dismembered body, discovered in the River Thames in September 2001, launched an investigation that took officers around the world (r)

12.05am Street Cops: Catching the Yobs (r) **1.00** Cruise TV with LoveitBookit (r) **2.00** Entertainment News on 5 **2.10** GPs: Behind Closed Doors (r) **3.05** Castle (r) **3.50** Friends (r) (AD) **4.35** Cruising with Susan Calman (r) (AD, SL) **5.25** Entertainment News on 5 **5.35-6.00** Children's Programmes (r) (SL)

television

The Yorkshire Vet Special: Peter's Dream
Channel 5, 8pm

The dream for the veterinarian Peter Wright is setting up places where animal lovers can remember their dead pets. He starts by heading to Sussex to visit the UK's first designated animal chaplain, Maria Brett, and her church's pet memorial garden, before returning to Yorkshire to create something similar. Wright also goes to the Howardian Hills National Landscape, where he plans to place pet memorial benches, and appears on Jeremy Vine's Channel 5 show to raise awareness about pet grief. **Joe Clay**

The Coen Brothers Story
BBC4, 9pm

In 1984 the Coen brothers emerged fully formed with *Blood Simple*, a twist-filled film noir that would set the template for their future classics such as *Fargo* (1996) and *No Country for Old Men* (2007). This updated version of Sarah Aspinall's 2000 documentary explores the journey that gave rise to this unique vision, with contributions from actors who have worked with them, including George Clooney, Jeff Bridges and Tilda Swinton. **JC**

STREAMING CHOICE

My Brilliant Career
Netflix

In the wake of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Little House on the Prairie* comes another Netflix series about the adventures of a young girl caught between civilisation and wildness. The darkest of the three original books, Miles Franklin's tale of growing up in the rural Australia of the 1890s has arguably received the finest adaptation. Philippa Northeast is magnificent as the headstrong Sybylla Melvyn and the first two episodes crackle with an earthy love-triangle sensuality. The modern-day needle-drops are terrible, but everything else feels note-perfect. **Andrew Male**

FILM CHOICE

Yesterday (12, 2019)
BBC1, 10.40pm

Himesh Patel is Jack Malik, a busker who, after a global power cut, emerges into a world where the Beatles never existed. But Jack can remember the tunes and records a smattering of them, becomes famous and is tempted over to LA. All along, the riddle of this new world deepens. What can it all mean? (113min) **Kevin Maher**

BBC4

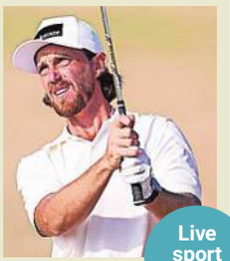
7.00pm Villages by the Sea. Ben Robinson explores the remains of a lost harbour in Port Carlisle (2/10) **7.30** Wainwright Walks. Julia Bradbury climbs Scafell Pike. Last in the series (AD) **8.00** Operation Mincemeat. Ben Macintyre reveals how Britain deceived Hitler into thinking the Allies were planning to invade Greece in 1943 (AD) **9.00** The Coen Brothers Story. Documentary on the film-makers. *See picks of the day* (AD) **10.00 FILM: Inside Llewyn Davis (15, 2013)** Coen brothers drama starring Oscar Isaac (AD) **11.40 FILM: Shaft (15, 1971)** Blaxploitation detective thriller starring Richard Roundtree **1.15am** Wainwright Walks (AD) **1.45** Operation Mincemeat (AD) **2.45am-3.15** Villages by the Sea (SL)

Sky Arts

6.00am The Wiz Live **8.00** Artist of the Year: Masterclass (AD) **9.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **10.00** Alfred Hitchcock Presents **11.00** Discovering: Yul Brynner (AD) **12.00** The Art of Film with Ian Nathan (AD) **1.00pm** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **2.00** The Alfred Hitchcock Hour **3.00** The Eighties (AD) **4.00** Discovering: Claude Rains (AD) **5.00** Portrait Artist of the Year 2022 (AD) **6.00** Tales of the Unexpected (AD) **7.00** Voices of the Valleys **8.00** Discovering: Michelle Pfeiffer. Profile of the American actress (AD) **9.00** Clint Eastwood: A Life in Film **10.50 FILM: I Am Alfred Hitchcock (15, 2021)** (AD) **12.30am** Chaplin: The Birth of the Tramp (AD) **1.45** Laurel and Hardy: Their Lives and Magic (AD) **3.30** Inside Art **4.00-5.00** Skinner & Mina's Literary Road Trip: Pope & Swift (AD)

More4

8.55am Find It, Fix It, Flog It (AD) **10.00** Four in a Bed **12.40pm** Come Dine with Me (AD) **3.20** Four in a Bed **5.50** Car SOS. Tim and Fuzz restore a 1990s Japanese super saloon (AD) **6.50** Car SOS. A Ferguson TE20 tractor (AD) **7.55** Grand Designs. Building a home on a minuscule 38-square-metre plot in London (9/10) (AD) **9.00** The Reclaimers: Made in Suffolk. Hayley embraces seasonal wildlife projects and creates a postcard pinboard (5/5) (AD) **10.00** 24 Hours in A&E. Doctors try to save a baby who stopped breathing at home (AD) **11.05** 24 Hours in A&E. A 74-year-old man is brought into A&E after suffering a suspected stroke (AD) **12.10am** 999: On the Front Line **1.15** 24 Hours in A&E (AD) **3.25am-3.55** A Place in the Sun



Live sport today

The British golfer Tommy Fleetwood

Live PGA Tour Golf
Sky Sports +, 12.45pm-5
Coverage of day one of the FedEx St Jude Championship, the first event in the FedEx Cup Playoffs, at TPC Southwind in Memphis, Tennessee

Live Tennis
Sky Sports +, 5pm-4am
Coverage of day one of the Cincinnati Open, a hard-court tournament at Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason, Ohio

Live MLB: New York Yankees v Seattle Mariners
TNT Sports 1, 6.30pm-9.30 (Start-time **6.35**). Coverage of the American League match from Yankee Stadium

Live Betfred Super League: Leeds Rhinos v Leigh Leopards
Sky Sports Main Event, Sky Sports Action, 7.30pm-10.15 (Kick-off **8.00**). From the match at AMT Headingley Stadium

Live CPL: Jamaica Kingsmen v Guyana Amazon Warriors
TNT Sports 1, 12.30am-4.45
Coverage of the T20 match from Sabina Park in Jamaica

Talking Pictures

6.00am FILM: A Gunman Has Escaped (PG, 1948) (b/w) **7.05 FILM: Behind the Mask (U, 1958)** **9.05 FILM: Highly Dangerous (U, 1950)** (b/w) **10.50 FILM: The Small Back Room (PG, 1948)** (b/w) **1.00pm** The Adventures of Sir Lancelot (b/w) **1.30 FILM: Rebecca (PG, 1940)** (b/w) **4.05 FILM: Jigsaw (PG, 1962)** (b/w) **6.10** Look at Life **6.20** Strange But True **6.55** The Brothers **8.00** Mark Saber (b/w) **8.30** The Wheeltappers and Shunters Social Club **9.20 FILM: The Sea Shall Not Have Them (U, 1955)** Drama (b/w) **11.10 FILM: The Comic (PG, 1969)** Comedy drama with Dick Van Dyke **1.05am FILM: X the Unknown (PG, 1956)** (b/w) **2.40** Colonel March Investigates (b/w) **4.00** Burke's Law (b/w) **5.00am-6.00** Film Noir

Film4

11.00am Journey to the Center of the Earth (U, 1959) Sci-fi adventure starring Pat Boone (AD) **1.40pm Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon (PG, 1942)** Mystery thriller starring Basil Rathbone (b/w) **3.00** Film4 Interview Programmes: Talking Film **3.10 The True Story of Jesse James (PG, 1957)** Biopic starring Robert Wagner **5.00 Tolkien (12, 2019)** JRR Tolkien biopic starring Nicholas Hoult **7.10 Moon (15, 2009)** Sci-fi drama starring Sam Rockwell (AD) **9.00 The Woman King (15, 2022)** An all-female group of warriors try to protect a West African kingdom. Drama with Viola Davis (AD) **11.40 Anna (15, 2019)** Action thriller starring Sasha Luss **2.00am-3.55 Berberian Sound Studio (15, 2012)** Thriller starring Toby Jones and Tonia Sotiropoulou

BBC3

7.00pm The Catch Up **7.05** Deadly 60 **7.30** Deadly 60 **8.00** Sort Your Life Out with Stacey Solomon (4/7) (AD) **9.00** Better Date than Never. New series. People take their first steps into the dating scene (1/7) (AD) **9.30** Better Date than Never. Jack hopes to meet someone he can be himself around (2/7) (AD) **10.00** Better Date than Never. Jack battles nerves on a date (3/7) (AD) **10.30** RuPaul's Drag Race UK: Meet the Queens. Introducing the queens **10.55 FILM: Bridget Jones's Baby (15, 2016)** Comedy sequel starring Renée Zellweger (AD) **12.50am** The Kim Kardashian Diamond Heist (AD) **1.35** The Trouble with Kanye (AD) **2.50am-3.50** Better Date than Never (AD, SL)

ITV2

6.00am Backyard Builds (SL) **6.30** Dress to Impress (AD, SL) **7.30** The Real Housewives of Potomac **8.20** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **9.15** The Only Way Is Essex **10.15** Dawson's Creek **11.10** Charmed **12.10pm** Deal or No Deal (AD) **1.10** Supermarket Sweep **2.10** The Floor (AD) **3.10** The Only Way Is Essex **4.10** The Real Housewives of Potomac **5.00** The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills **6.00** Celebrity Catchphrase (AD) **7.00** The Floor (AD) **8.00** The 1% Club (AD) **9.00** Romesh Ranganathan's Parents' Evening **10.00** Changing Ends (AD) **10.35** Family Guy (AD) **11.35** American Dad! (AD) **12.35am** Bob's Burgers (AD) **1.30am-2.20** Deal or No Deal (AD, SL)

ITV3

6.00am George and Mildred **7.05** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **8.10** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **9.10** Agatha Christie's Poirot (AD) **11.30** Heartbeat (AD) **1.35pm** Midsomer Murders (AD) **3.35** Classic Emmerdale (AD) **4.40** Classic Coronation Street (AD) **5.50** Heartbeat. Drama (AD) **8.00** Vera. The detective investigates the murder of a fisherman (4/4) (AD) **10.00** Grantchester. Alphy discovers that a young woman he knows has gone missing (7/8) (AD) **11.00** Grantchester. Geordie and Larry investigate the mysterious death of a reclusive man (8/8) (AD) **11.50** Trial & Retribution. Part two of two. Last in the series **1.25am-2.20** Agatha Christie's Poirot. Stars David Suchet (AD)

ITV4

6.00am The Derby Through the Years **6.20** River Monsters **6.50** Magnum, PI (AD) **7.50** Robin of Sherwood **9.00** Boon **10.10** The Professionals (AD) **11.15** Robin of Sherwood **12.20pm** Magnum, PI (AD) **2.25** The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes (AD) **3.30** Boon **4.35** The Professionals (AD) **5.45** Minder (AD) **6.50** Sharpe. The hero is sent to capture a fort behind French lines **9.00** Benidorm. First-ever episode of the comedy series (AD) **9.35** Benidorm. Martin and Kate get lost in the town centre (AD) **10.00** Benidorm (AD) **10.30** Benidorm (AD) **11.00** Black Sails. Vane feels like Flint may be a threat **12.15am** Hell's Kitchen **1.10** The Professionals (AD) **2.15am-2.45** Auto Mundial

U&Drama

6.00am Teleshopping **7.15** The Bill **8.05** Doctors **9.20** Classic Holby City **10.40** Casualty (AD) **11.40** The Bill **12.40pm** Classic EastEnders **2.00** Classic Neighbours **3.00** Whitstable Pearl (AD) **4.10** Lovejoy **5.20** As Time Goes By **6.00** Last of the Summer Wine **8.00** The Marlow Murder Club. Judith, Becks and Suzie investigate when the Mayor dies in the middle of a meeting (1/6) (AD) **9.00** Hit Point. New series. Romantic thriller starring Nick Blood and Saffron Hocking (1/6) (AD) **10.00** New Tricks. Reinvestigating three cases of rape (4/10) (AD) **11.20** Luther (3/4) (AD) **12.35am** Lovejoy. The dealer visits Venice **1.45** Sister Boniface Mysteries (AD) **2.45** Hotel Portofino (SL) **4.00am-6.00** Teleshopping

Variations

BBC1 N Ireland
10.40pm The Crime I Can't Forget (r) 11.30pm-1.20am FILM: Yesterday (2019) Comedy

BBC1 Scotland
7.00pm-7.30 River City (r) 12.30am Scotcast (r) 1.00 Alan Carr's Picture Slam (r) 1.45 Weather for the Week Ahead 1.50am-6.00 BBC News

BBC2 Wales
11.05pm-12.05am Eisteddfod 2026 with Huw Stephens (r)

STV
12.35am-3.00 Shop on TV 3.50am-5.05 Unwind with STV

BBC Scotland
7.00pm News 7.30 Hidden Lives (r) 8.00 Beechgrove Garden 8.30 Scotland's Greatest Escape (r) 9.00 Martin Compston's Scottish Fling (r) 10.00 Scot Squad (r) 10.30 Edinburgh Unlocked. New series. The best of the Edinburgh Festival 11.00 Scotcast 11.30pm-12.00 Growing Up Scottish (r)

S4C
6.00am Cyw 12.00 News; Weather 12.05pm Cais Quinnell (r) 12.30 Heno (r) 1.00 Codi Hwyl (r) 1.30 Sgwrs Dan y Lloer (r) 2.00 News; Weather 2.05 Prynhawn Da 3.00 News; Weather 3.05 Sioe Môn 2026 (r) 4.00 Awr Fawr5.00 Stwnsh: Byd Rwtsh Dai Potsh (r) 5.15 Larfa (r) 5.20 Dyffryn Mwmin (r) 5.45 Cuddio (r) 6.00 Cynefin (r) 6.59 News 7.00 Heno 7.30 News; Weather 8.00 Pobol y Cwm 8.25 Gwlad y Basg: Gwilym Bowen Rhys (r) 8.55 News; Weather 9.00 Fairbourne: Y Mor Wrth y Drws (r) 10.00 Taclo'r Ty (r) 10.30-11.35pm Yr Afon (r)

PBS America

8.00am Weathered: Earth's Extremes **8.35** Digging Up Britain's Past **9.35** Walrus: Life on Thin Ice **10.45** Peleliu: WWII's Most Well-Preserved Battlefield **11.55** Inside Japan's War **1.00pm** Weathered: Earth's Extremes **1.35** Digging Up Britain's Past **2.35** Walrus: Life on Thin Ice **3.45** Peleliu: WWII's Most Well-Preserved Battlefield **4.55** Inside Japan's War **6.00** Digging Up Britain's Past **7.00** Walrus: Life on Thin Ice **8.10** Peleliu: WWII's Most Well-Preserved Battlefield **9.15** Inside Japan's War **10.20** Walrus: Life on Thin Ice **11.30** Weathered: Earth's Extremes. The severe impacts of droughts and floods on agriculture (4/6) **12.00** Peleliu: WWII's Most Well-Preserved Battlefield **1.15am-2.00** Weathered: Earth's Extremes

Sky Atlantic

6.00am Fish Town (r) **8.00** Billions (r) (AD) **10.15** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **12.35pm** Homicide: Life on the Street (r) **2.30** Billions (r) (AD) **4.40** The Last of Us (r) (AD) **6.40** House of the Dragon. Daemon visits his wife in the Vale (r) (AD) **7.45** House of the Dragon. Rhaenyra navigates continued speculation about her children (r) (AD) **9.00** Possession. Oliver becomes unexpectedly violent (AD) **10.00** Possession. Claudia seeks her Aunt Mercy to help her defeat Charlotte and is put in a trance-like state led by their ancestors (AD) **11.00** All Her Fault. News about Carrie's hideout throws suspicion on all the Irvines, while Brian uncovers a betrayal from Peter (r) (AD) **12.05am** House of the Dragon (r) (AD) **2.45** Billions (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** The Guest Wing (r) (AD)

Sky Docs

6.00am The 2010s (r) **7.00** Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD) **8.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **9.00** 100 Foot Wave (r) (AD) **10.00** Juan Carlos: Downfall of the King (r) **10.55** Celtics City (r) (AD) **12.00** Sergio Leone: The Italian Who Invented America (r) **2.00pm** Premier League 360 — Big Sam's Bolton (r) (AD) **4.00** The Directors (r) (AD) **5.00** Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD) **5.55** Burden of Proof: Who Killed Jennifer Pandos? (r) (AD) **8.00** The Essex Murders: Who Killed Goldfinger? Documentary (r) (AD) **11.00 FILM: Touching the Void (15, 2003)** Documentary by the director Kevin Macdonald **1.00am** King of Lies: Football's Greatest Con (r) (AD) **2.50** Faye (r) **4.40** My Icon: Rachel Yankey (r) (AD) **5.00am-6.00** Discovering: Kevin Costner (r) (AD)

U&Yesterday

6.10am Abandoned Engineering (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **10.00** Berlin Wall: The Night the Iron Curtain Closed (AD) **11.00** The World at War **12.00** Antiques Roadshow **2.00pm** Bangers & Cash (AD) **4.00** Berlin Wall: The Night the Iron Curtain Closed (AD) **5.00** The World at War **6.00** Antiques Roadshow **7.00** A Perfect Planet (AD) **8.00** Bangers & Cash. A 1968 Mini Moke and a Polish Fiat 216 (AD) **9.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics. A Ford Escort Mexico (AD) **10.00** Bangers & Cash. *Call the Midwife* star Cliff Parisi drops off his Bedford CA campervan (AD) **11.00** Bangers & Cash (AD) **12.00** Bangers & Cash: Restoring Classics (AD) **1.00am** Find It, Fix It, Flog It **2.00** Abandoned Engineering (AD) **3.00am-6.10** Teleshopping

MindGames

Tetonor Fiendish No 700

25	135	49	60
156	14	324	32
45	221	19	500
84	48	468	30

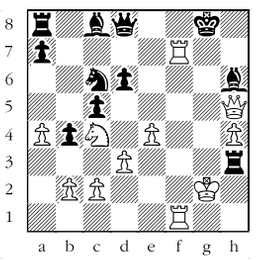
		6	6	7		12		13		17				

When complete, the strip below the grid can be split into eight pairs of numbers. Adding the numbers in a pair gives one of the 16 numbers in the grid. Multiplying them gives a different number in the grid. For example, a 4 and 6 in the strip could be paired to make 10 (4+6) and 24 (4x6) in the grid. Enter each sum below the corresponding number in the grid. The blanks in the strip must be deduced, bearing in mind the numbers are listed in ascending order.

The next Tetonor puzzle will appear on Tuesday

For more puzzles, including Mini Sudoku, extra Codeword, Train Tracks and Futoshiki go to page 10

Winning Move



Black to play.
This position is from Nihal-Zhao, Hong Kong 2026.

When you are attacking it can sometimes be easy to find spectacular moves – the adrenalin is flowing and you are on the lookout for them. When defending it is harder. You tend to focus on all the things your opponent can do, generating a different mindset. Black's cause seems hopeless but he spotted a spectacular coup. What was it?

Codeword No 5918

25	10	20	25	25	11	■	9	7	10	10	6	13
6	■	2	■	7	■	■	■	20	■	14	■	4
12	14	1	■	20	2	17	4	22	22	4	2	9
26	■	7	■	19	■	6	■	6	■	■	■	10
14	7	12	2	■	22	12	4	23	11	23	10	14
12	■	11	■	21	■	16	■	12	■	7	■	22
■	■	4	2	23	14	21	21	7	2	22	■	■
7	■	2	■	15	■	15	■	22	■	23	■	24
5 D	6 O	9 G	9	14	12	14	10	■	9	15	14	14
15	■	■	■	5	■	14	■	21	■	7	■	12
14	22	4	8	20	14	22	22	14	■	18	20	21
12	■	23	■	10	■	■	■	7	■	10	■	14
14	10	14	1	14	2	■	18	12	14	14	3	11

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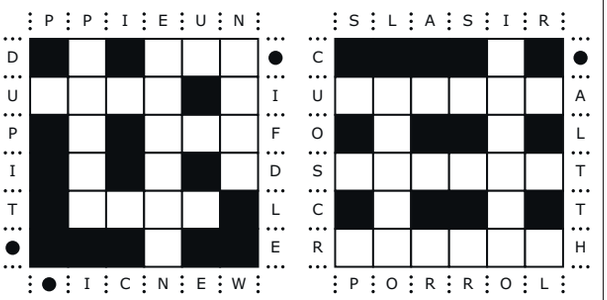
A B C Ø E F Ø H I J K L M N Ø P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

1	2	3	4	5 D	6 O	7	8	9 G	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Every letter in this crossword-style grid is represented by a number from 1 to 26. Each letter of the alphabet appears in the grid at least once. Use the letters already provided to work out the identity of further letters. Enter letters in the main grid and the smaller reference grid until all 26 letters of the alphabet have been accounted for. Proper nouns are excluded. *Yesterday's solution, right*

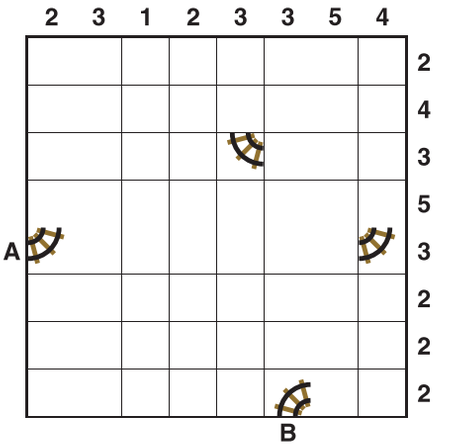
Clueline **Stuck on Codeword?** To receive 4 random clues call 0901 293 6262 or text TIMECODE to 64343. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. Texts cost £1 plus your standard network charge. For the full solution call 0905 757 0142. If you have an old newspaper and need clues from the past 7 days, call 0905 624 0024. Calls to 0905 cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5.30pm).

Lexica Easy No 9051 Hard No 9052



Slide the letters either horizontally or vertically back into the grid to produce a completed crossword. Letters are allowed to slide over other letters

Train Tracks No 2943



Lay tracks to enable the train to travel from village A to village B. The numbers indicate how many sections of track go in each row and column. There are only straight sections and curved sections. The track cannot cross itself.

Quintagram® No 2645

Solve all five **cryptic** clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Team exhaled audibly (4)

_ _ _ _

2 Farmyard sound from good little pig (5)

_ _ _ _ _

3 Very little friend, go (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Noted individually, one different, it'd seem (8)

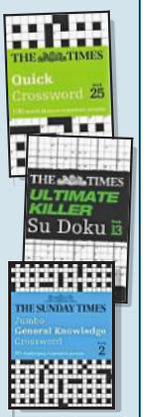
_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Wrecker, huge beast who's in the Land of Nod? (9)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	B	D	D	D	E	E	E
E	G	I	I	I	L	L	L
M	N	O	P	R	R	R	S
S	T	T	T	U	U	Y	Z

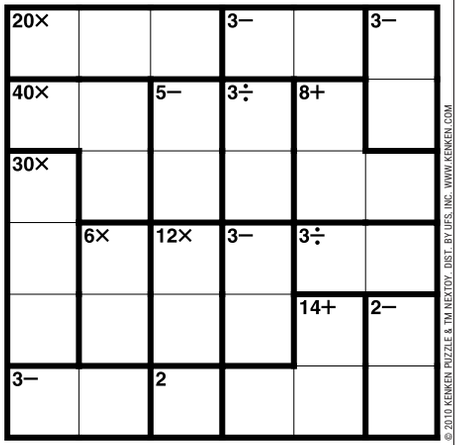
Challenge your mind with puzzle books from The Times



timesbookshop.co.uk

Try Wordhunt and Picle, our new online Quick Play puzzles at thetimes.com/puzzles and on the Live app

KenKen Difficult No 6910



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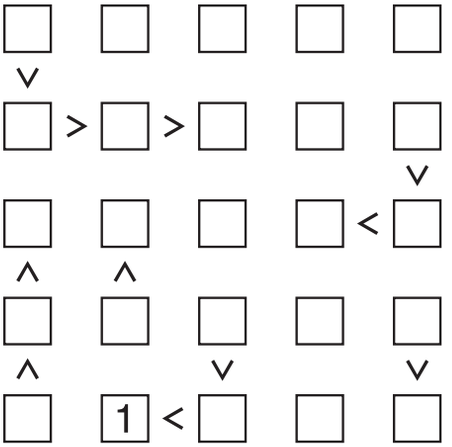
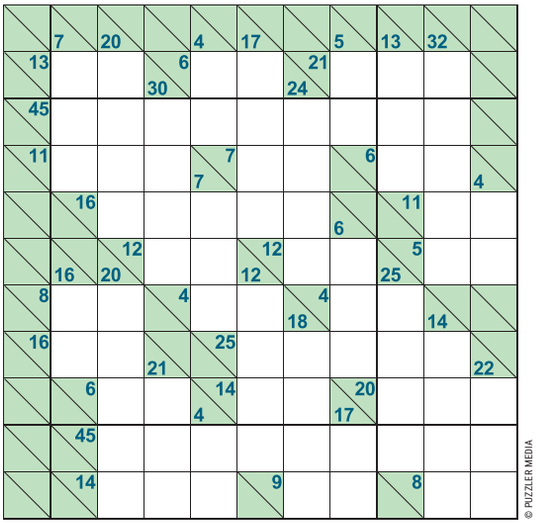
All the digits 1 to 6 must appear in every row and column. In each thick-line "block", the target number in the top left-hand corner is calculated from the digits in all the cells in the block, using the operation indicated by the symbol.

Futoshiki No 5458



Fill the blank squares so that every row and column contains each of the numbers 1 to 5 once only. The symbols between the squares indicate whether a number is larger (>) or smaller (<) than the number next to it.

Kakuro No 4417



Fill the grid using the numbers 1 to 9 only. The numbers in each horizontal or vertical run of white squares add up to the total in the triangle to its left or above it. The same number may occur more than once in a row or column, but not within the same run of white squares.

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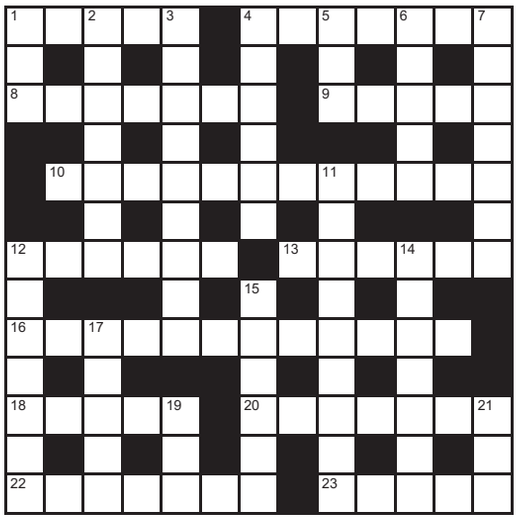
MindGames

times2 Crossword No 10,234



Across

1 Cooker (5)
4 Citizens of Bratislava's country (7)
8 Brilliance exhibited by a performer (7)
9 Conjure up (a memory, eg) (5)
10 Worker in the machinery of government (5,7)
12 Tent fabric (6)
13 Like a deity (6)
16 (Of a remark) wise in a glib or superficial way (6-6)
18 Oil-yielding fruit (5)
20 Intense desire to have (7)
22 Exalt (7)
23 Each one (5)

Down

1 Replacement player (3)
2 Rapturous round of applause (7)
3 Explain, enlighten (9)
4 Thinly populated (6)
5 Metal-rich mineral (3)
6 Hawaiian salutation (5)
7 Wraith, spirit (7)
11 State again (9)
12 Powerful tropical storm (7)
14 List one by one (*S, not Z*) (7)
15 Spike of frozen water (6)
17 Omit (a sound in a word) (5)
19 Seventh Greek letter (3)
21 Man (3)

Solution to Crossword 10,233

H	Y	P	N	O	S	I	S			K		G
O		E		D			T	U	V	A	L	U
T	I	R	A	D	E		O			N		N
		P		I			R	I	N	G	U	P
C	R	E	A	T	I	V	E			A		O
H		N		Y		E	Y	E	B	R	O	W
O		D				G				O		D
C	H	I	M	E	R	A		S		O		E
O		C		E	N	F	O	R	C	E	R	
L	O	U	C	H	E			O		O		
A		L			C		U	N	J	U	S	T
T	H	A	T	C	H			E		R		E
E		R			O	P	E	R	E	T	T	A

Need help with today's puzzle? Call 0905 757 0143 to check the answers. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Bridge Andrew Robson

Belgium secured a big win over Switzerland, the pre-tournament favourites, in the Open series of the recent European Bridge National Team Championships. This was the curio that was Board 22.

At Table One, the Swiss N-S reached 5♣ and West led his singleton heart, declarer playing dummy's king. It may appear best for East to win the ace and give West a ruff but declarer could now succeed by winning West's club return (best) then running all his clubs and hearts, squeezing West between ♠Q98 and ♦A in the endgame. However, East cleverly ducked dummy's king of hearts — and now declarer had to go one down.

At Table Two, the Belgian N-S reached the dizzier heights of 6♣. Steven De Donder capitalised on the Swiss West's unfortunate lead of the ace of diamonds.

Ruffing the lead, declarer crossed to the queen of clubs and ruffed a second diamond. He then drew trumps (discarding dummy's low heart) and led a heart to the king. East won the ace (ducking no better) and switched to the ten of spades.

Winning the ace, declarer crossed to the queen of hearts then cashed the king of diamonds and ruffed a fourth diamond, bringing down the queen. He could now cross to the jack of hearts, drop his third spade on dummy's promoted jack of diamonds, and chalk up his 6♣.

Neither Switzerland (14th) nor Belgium (15th) qualified for next year's Bermuda Bowl. The eight qualifiers were (in order of where they finished): Norway, Denmark, Israel, Sweden, Netherlands, England, Iceland and France.

andrew.robson@thetimes.co.uk

Dealer: West, Vulnerability: East-West

Teams | Advanced

	♠ J4 ♥ KQJ6 ♦ KJ762 ♣ Q7	
♠ Q98732 ♥ 9 ♦ A1053 ♣ 109	N W E S	♠ 105 ♥ A1072 ♦ Q984 ♣ J52
	♠ AK6 ♥ 8543 ♦ - ♣ AK8643	

Table One (Switzerland N-S)

S	W	N	E
	2♦(1)	Pass	2♠(2)
3♣	Pass(3)	3♠(4)	Pass
5♣(5)	end		

(1) The dreaded Multi, showing a Weak Two in a major.
(2) Pass or correct (to hearts — at a higher level).
(3) Would bid on with hearts.
(4) Asking bid (now knowing West has spades).
(5) May bid 3NT (spades covered).

Contract: 5♣, Opening Lead: ♥9

Table Two (Belgium N-S)

S(De Donder)	W	N	E
	2♦(1)	Dbl(2)	2♥(2)
Dbl(4)	2♠	Pass	Pass
6♣(5)	end		

(1) More Multifarious activity ...
(2) Showing about 13-15, a free way into the auction.
(3) Pass or correct, no need to advertise hearts (as the 2♥ bid did at Table One).
(4) Card-showing (as they unhelpfully say).
(5) Best guess.

Contract: 6♣, Opening Lead: ♦A

Brain Trainer

EASY	19	x 7	+ 2	DOUBLE IT	x 4	÷ 9	+ 12	DOUBLE IT	– 12	+ 30
MEDIUM	230	x 4	÷ 8	TRIPLE IT	DOUBLE IT	+ 10	½ OF IT	x 4	÷ 8	x 3
HARDER	96	+⅓ OF IT	x 4	+ 9	DOUBLE IT	DOUBLE IT	75% OF IT	– 93	÷ 30	TREBLE IT

ANSWER

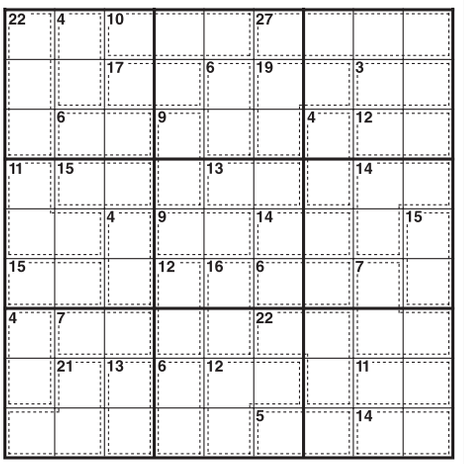
Polygon

From these letters, make words of **four** or more letters, always including the central letter. Answers must be in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, excluding capitalised words, plurals, conjugated verbs (past tense etc), adverbs ending in LY, comparatives and superlatives.
How you rate 12 words, average; 17, good; 21, very good; 26, excellent

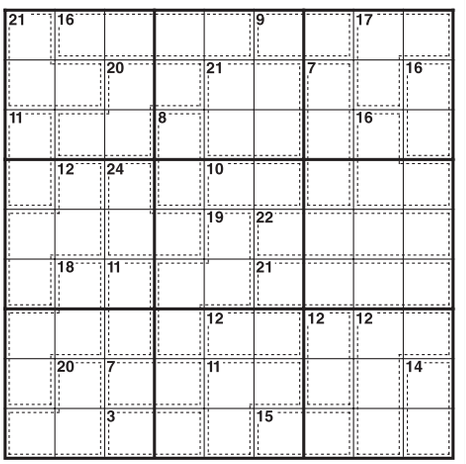
Yesterday's answers

ceil, celt, cess, cist, cite, citole, close, closet, clot, coil, cole, colt, coset, cosset, cossie, cost, cote, cotise, loessic, ossicle, otic, scot, sect, sice, slice, socle, **solstice**, stoic, telco, telic

Killer Gentle No 10,874



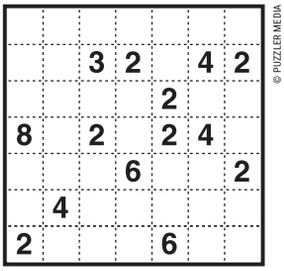
Killer Tough No 10,875



As with standard Sudoku, fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9. Each set of cells joined by dotted lines must add up to the target number in its top-left corner. Within each set of cells joined by dotted lines, a digit cannot be repeated.

Cluelines Stuck on Sudoku, Killer or KenKen? Call 0901 293 6263 before midnight to receive four clues for any of today's puzzles. Calls cost £1 plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke, 0333 202 3390 (Mon-Fri 9am-5.30pm).

Cell Blocks No 5801



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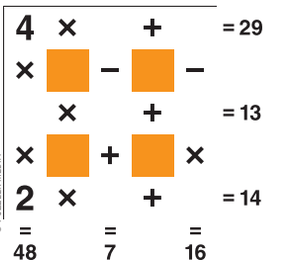
Divide the grid into square or rectangular blocks, each containing one digit only. Every block must contain the number of cells indicated by the digit inside it.

Set Square No 4420



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Enter each of the numbers from 1 to 9 in the grid, so that the six sums work. We've placed two numbers to get you started. Each sum should be calculated left to right or top to bottom.

Please note, BODMAS does not apply

Solutions

Quick Cryptic 3378

P	O	S	T	C	A	R	D	G	R	U	B
A	L	O	E			E	I				
S	T	E	R	N		P	A	R	A	S	O	L
S	E	T		A	E	E	G				
A	M	P		R	E	I	N	F	O	R	C	E
G			A	R	R	V						
E	S	C	A	P	E		P	I	G	E	O	N
		O	T		S	G			I			
L	O	N	G	I	T	U	D	E		B	A	G
O	C		O	P		R	L	H				
T	R	A	I	N	E	E		A	B	O	U	T
T	V			R		T	A	I				
O	M	E	N		A	B	S	E	N	T	E	E

Codeword 5917

U	V	U	L	A		D	E	B	A	R		
T		I	O		P	X	L	A				
A	S	S	E	T		E	C	H	E	L	O	N
W	I	T		R	A		O	K				
N	E	T	W	O	R	K		U	N	T	I	L
Y	O			Y		S				E		
G	R	A	P	H		S	T	A	S	H		
J		R	U			U	T					
A	M	P	L	E		S	E	V	E	N	T	H
D	I	M		H	A	R	I					
E	S	Q	U	I	R	E		P	R	O	N	G
D	U	E	R		I	O	H					
Z	E	B	R	A		E	D	I	F	Y		

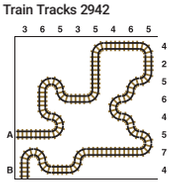
Kakuro 4416

4	1		9	4	8		1	7
9	8	4		8	1	3	7	5	9
7	2	1	5				9	3	
8	3		9	3			2	8	
	6	7	1	2	3	4	8	9
1	6	7	8	2	4	9	3	
4	9			1	4		5	1
	1	5			5	1	8	3
8	4	9	6	5	7		3	9	8
3	2		8	2	1		7	2

Sudoku 17,019

4	2	1	9	3	5	8	7	6
3	5	7	6	2	8	4	1	9
8	9	6	1	7	4	5	3	2
7	4	9	2	5	1	6	8	3
1	8	5	3	4	6	9	2	7
6	3	2	8	9	7	1	5	4
9	1	3	5	6	2	7	4	8
5	6	4	7	8	3	2	9	1
2	7	8	4	1	9	3	6	5

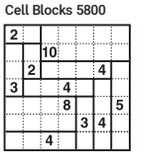
Train Tracks 2942



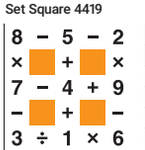
Sudoku 17,020

6	7	4	2	8	9	3	5	1
3	5	2	6	1	4	7	8	9
8	1	9	7	3	5	6	4	2
4	6	8	3	7	1	2	9	5
5	2	1	8	9	6	4	7	3
9	3	7	4	5	2	8	1	6
2	9	6	1	4	8	5	3	7
1	8	3	5	6	7	9	2	4
7	4	5	9	2	3	1	6	8

Cell Blocks 5800



Set Square 4419



Lexica 9049

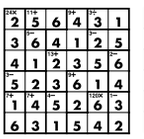
Sudoku 17,021

6	3	1	5	7	2	9	8	4
5	9	7	8	4	3	2	1	6
4	8	2	1	9	6	3	5	7
7	5	3	6	2	8	4	9	1
2	1	4	7	3	9	5	6	8
8	6	9	4	5	1	7	3	2
9	4	6	2	1	5	8	7	3
3	2	8	9	6	7	1	4	5
1	7	5	3	8	4	6	2	9

Futoshiki 5457

2	1	3	5	4
1	3	5	4	2
4	2	1	3	5
5	4	2	1	3
3	5	4	2	1

KenKen 6909



Lexica 9050

Killer 10,872

7	1	5	9	8	4	2	6	3
3	8	4	2	6	1	9	5	7
9	2	6	3	5	7	1	8	4
8	6	7	1	4	2	3	9	5
5	3	2	6	7	9	8	4	1
1	4	9	5	3	8	7	2	6
2	5	1	4	9	3	6	7	8
4	9	8	7	1	6	5	3	2
6	7	3	8	2	5	4	1	9

Killer 10,873

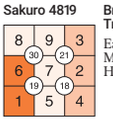
7	4	1	5	6	9	8	2	3
3	6	8	1	7	2	4	5	9
9	2	5	4	3	8	7	6	1
8	9	2	7	1	4	5	3	6
4	7	3	2	5	6	9	1	8
5	1	6	8	9	3	2	7	4
6	3	7	9	4	5	1	8	2
1	8	4	6	2	7	3	9	5
2	5	9	3	8	1	6	4	7

Today's solutions

Concise Quintagram
1 Rams
2 Water
3 Golden
4 Traitors
5 Gateshead

Cryptic Quintagram
1 Side
2 Grunt
3 Paltry
4 Itemised
5 Bulldozer

Sakuro 4819



Brain Trainer
Easy 282
Medium 525
Harder 147

Word watch

Rachis (b) The shaft of a feather (*Collins*)
Macher (a) An influential person (*Chambers*)
Auguste (a) A clown (*OED*)

Chess — Winning Move

1 ... Qg5+! is an ingenious defence that exploits the position of the white queen. After 2 Qxg5+ (not 2 hxg5 when 2 ... Rxh5 wins for Black) 2 ... Bxg5 3 hxg5 the position is balanced. Black is a piece up but White has two pawns and very active rooks

Quiz

1 Avignon **2** Horse, as in the Osmington White Horse **3** Apple **4** Italy **5** Joe Biden **6** Duran Duran **7** Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) **8** John Stonehouse **9** [Dr Hawley Harvey] *Crippen* **10** Vermont **11** Special Boat Service (SBS). He died in the Broad Peak avalanche **12** Aravind Adiga **13** Luisa Omielan **14** Manchester City **15** Jack Russell terrier

THE TIMES

13.08.26

MindGames

For extra puzzles See page 10

Word watch
David Parfitt

Rachis
a A device for stretching leather
b The shaft of a feather
c A demanding piece for piano

Macher
a An influential person
b A pilot of supersonic aircraft
c Grazing land alongside the sea

Auguste
a A clown
b A cordon bleu chef
c A passionate kiss

Answers on page 15

Sudoku

Mild No 17,022

			9					
		6						7
	7		1	5	3			
4		8					9	3
		1		8		7		
		7			4		8	5
				2			7	
			3		8	4		2
	3		6		7		5	8

Fiendish No 17,023

	2	3				9	4
	4	1		2		8	7
		8				6	
1							5
	7			9			3
4							9
2			3		5		7
7			9		8		4

Super fiendish No 17,024

		9					
				6	3	5	4
			8		6		2
1		7					
	8				4	7	3
7							
2	1		5				6
3			6				5
8	5		3		2	4	

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Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

The Times Daily Quiz
Olav Bjortomt

1 Which French city is known by the Occitan name Avinhon?

2 Osmington in Dorset is home to a chalk hill figure depicting George III riding what animal?

3 Galloway Pippin and Lord Derby are cooking varieties of which fruit?

4 The Chianti Sculpture Park is located in which European country?

5 *Promise Me, America* (2026) is a forthcoming memoir by which former US president?

6 In 1982, which English pop rock band had Top Ten hits with *Save a Prayer* and *Rio*?

ALAMY

7 In its first year, over 660,000 people visited which museum's East Storehouse in London?

8 Which Labour MP for Walsall North was arrested in Melbourne, Australia in December 1974?

9 Former Metropolitan Police inspector Walter Dew wrote the 1938 memoir *I Caught ...* which American murderer?

10 In which New England state is Montpelier, the least populous US state capital?

11 The mountaineer Nirmal Purja (1983-2026) was the first Gurkha soldier to join which elite British unit?

12 Which Indian-born author was shortlisted for Australia's Miles Franklin award for his novel *Amnesty* (2020)?

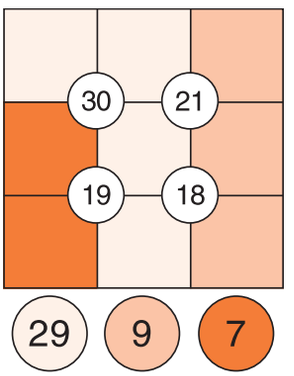
13 Which comedian's Edinburgh Fringe show *What Would Beyoncé Do?!* was broadcast as a BBC special in 2017?

14 The former footballer Jill Scott won the 2016 Women's Super League title with which club?

15 Which dog breed is pictured?

Answers on page 15

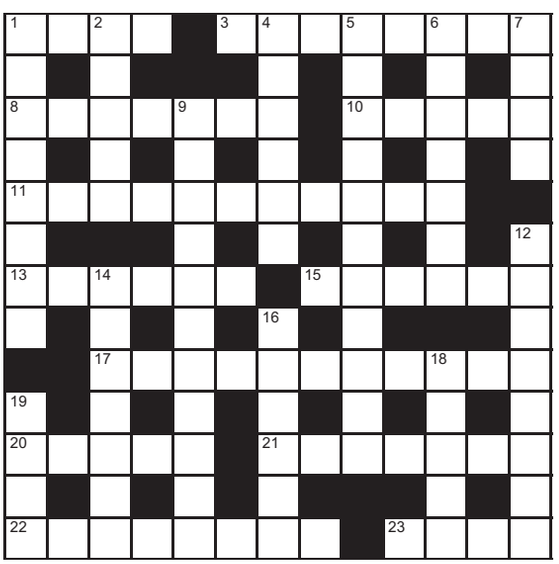
Sakuro
No 4819



Place the numbers 1 to 9 in the spaces so that the number in each circle is equal to the sum of the four surrounding spaces, and each colour total is correct

For interactive puzzles visit thetimes.com

The Times Quick Cryptic
No 3379 by Dangle



Across
1 Lot of crumbly feta (4)
3 Fish alongside boats in area with many bays (3,5)
8 Advice from governing body announced (7)
10 Plunder gun (5)
11 General visiting one running magazine, perhaps (11)
13 Found earth in box (6)
15 Boss I love in workplace? (6)
17 Supply Liberian oil for Donald Trump? (11)
20 Vessel blocking that road to the west (5)
21 I retain strange disinclination to move (7)
22 Stage one in development? (5,3)
23 Summons comedian over start of routine (4)

Down
1 Confront group for cosmetic treatment (4,4)
2 Digital lift-share organiser? (5)
4 Oscar moves into first-class accommodation aboard ship (6)
5 Its presence affected determination (11)
6 Checked entertaining female is urbane (7)
7 Appear in diocese before mass (4)
9 Be naughty, stopping at 20:00, reportedly, and sparkle (11)
12 Expectation for European project (8)
14 Bag more bananas in prohibition (7)
16 Strenuous sex over phone (6)
18 Playwright leaving quietly in Bury (5)
19 Defile father and second son (4)

Yesterday's solution on page 15

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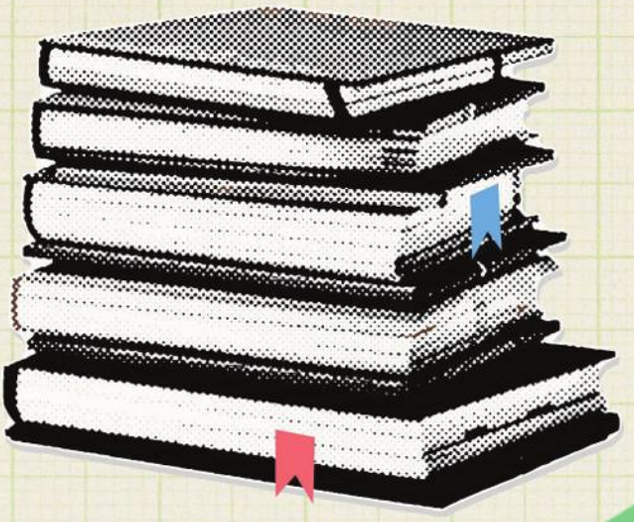
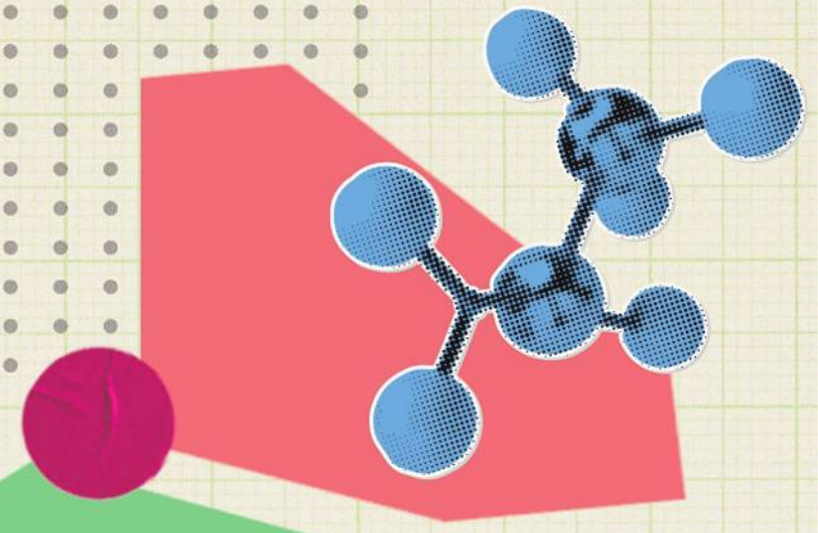
THE TIMES

THURSDAY AUGUST 13 2026





Countdown to University

Student guide and clearing special: your next steps in higher education

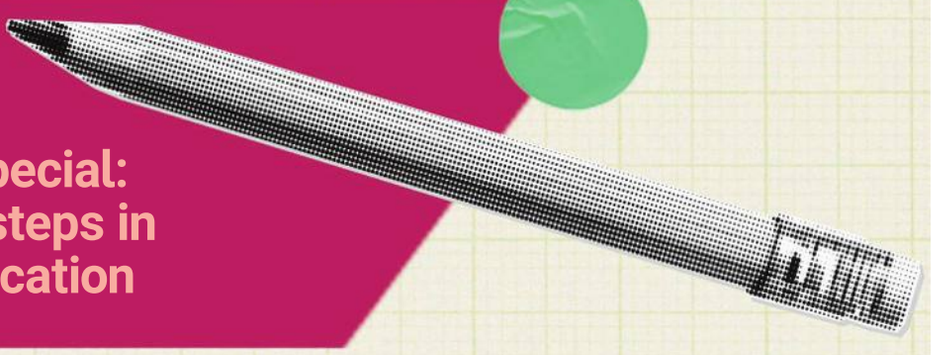


ILLUSTRATION: CHLOE LEEDER FOR THE TIMES

Time for plan B — here's how to get through clearing

Don't panic, prepare yourself and pick up the phone — the head of Ucas, **Jo Saxton**, offers her advice

As the chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Admission Service (Ucas), and as a former school leader, I've been privileged to witness countless young people celebrate their exam results and prepare for their pivotal next steps. I'm also a parent of young adults who have lived through the highs and lows that come with the path to higher education.

While it's true that most young people secure their first choice (their Ucas "firm" choice) each year, growing numbers successfully find a place through clearing. This is the final stage of the Ucas admissions process, when applicants can search, choose and apply for courses that still have places available.

Results day brings excitement for many, but for some it can bring disappointment. Whether a young person is still looking for an available place, rethinking their plans and considering a different course or institution, or even submitting an application for the first time, there will be plenty of choices to make in clearing.

For the parents and carers supporting a young person applying to higher education this year, or indeed a student preparing for the future, understanding how clearing works will help you to feel confident in making an informed decision.

Preparation

Clearing is open from July 2 to October 19, but places on the most selective courses at the most selective institutions do tend to go quickly — the busiest day for clearing is results day itself.

One of the most helpful things a student can do on the morning of results day is to create a shortlist of universities and courses they want to consider in the event that they need to explore alternative options, and to have an open conversation about what "plan B" could look like.

You'll also need to have a Ucas Hub account login, clearing number and personal ID on hand.

When results are released

For those considering using clearing today, it's important to know that official vacancies are only available in the Ucas search tool and are updated based on the places universities and colleges have to fill. Make decisions based on these official sources, rather than relying on AI tools, which can have incorrect or outdated information.

In clearing, students can also consider institutions whose offers they might have previously declined. Students can also use Clearing Plus, which matches them to course vacancies they may be interested in based on their Ucas application. A crucial part of the clearing process is contacting universities and colleges directly to discuss available places. Having the relevant grades and personal details written down to reference in these discussions helps to keep both student and parent calm.

Some students I've spoken to say that preparing a checklist in advance and practising phone calls beforehand has also helped them to feel more confident on the day.

Once a student has contacted a university or college and secured a place, they should add it to their clearing choice in the Ucas Hub.

Support available

This year, the results period and clearing is taking place in the context of widespread discussions around the cost and value of higher education. One thing I'm particularly aware of from talking to students, and their teachers and advisers, all over the country is how much financial considerations are shaping their choices.

Every young person should have the chance to make decisions based on ambition, not affordability, and Ucas is working hard to break down barriers to progression.

That's why we've launched a new budget calculator, available in a student's Ucas Hub account, allowing applicants to compare the cost of living across 100 UK locations for the first time and to build a personalised budget. They can also see the range of financial packages being offered by colleges and universities through Ucas's scholarships and bursaries tool.

> Every young person should make choices based on ambition, not affordability

Alongside financial assistance, Ucas has other tools on its website to support informed decision-making, including subject tasters and virtual work experiences.

Still time to apply

I'm a firm believer in the power of higher education and am committed to ensuring that all who could benefit from higher education have the opportunity to do so. And for those who haven't yet applied to start university or college this autumn but think they might be interested, it's not too late — this is particularly the case for mature students, who typically apply much later than school leavers.

In fact, any parent or carer contemplating an empty nest and wondering what to do with their new-found free time might even be tempted to explore the options on offer.

Whatever comes next, I wish every student — and their parents and carers — the very best this results day.

The latest news and analysis on A-level results day thetimes.com

Is university still worth it? The arguments for and against

Education editor **Nicola Woolcock** on the professional and personal benefits of higher education

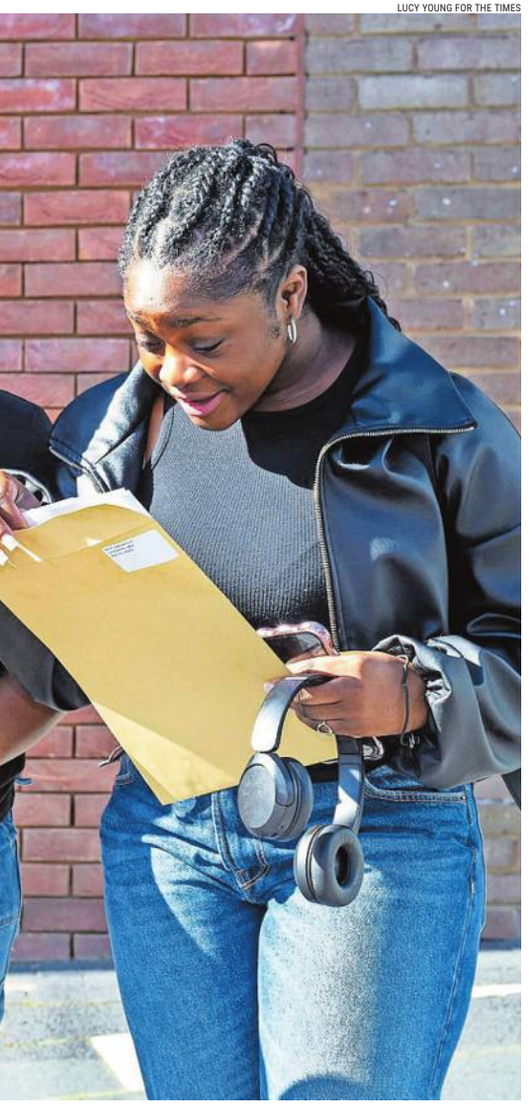
Sixth-formers waving goodbye to their school days and heading off to university this autumn could be forgiven for having greater than usual levels of apprehension. As well as the personal leap they are making from A-levels to degree — and, for some, from home to campus — there has been massive angst and debate around the value of going to university and the spiralling levels of student loan debt.

Chuck in fears that AI is replacing graduate jobs, rows about free speech on campus, university mergers, course closures and lecturers being made redundant, and some families could be led to question whether they should bother.

Tuition fees in England will increase this year to £9,790 per year, up from the previous cap of £9,535. For a three-year course, this takes the cost to £29,370 — £765 more than last year's cohort. Maximum maintenance loans are increasing by 2.71 per cent to £14,135 a year for students in London, £10,830 outside London, and

> Graduates still, on the whole, enjoy a salary premium

LUCY YOUNG FOR THE TIMES



£9,118 for those living with parents.

This can easily add up to a student owing more than £70,000 by the time they graduate. Interest is charged on tuition fee and maintenance loans from the start of the degree, with a 40-year repayment period.

Maintenance grants are being reintroduced but not until 2028. That is too late for this cohort but worth knowing for those who have just taken their GCSEs — and their families.

Such figures are still worth paying, according to many. While there are alternatives to university — mainly in the form of starting work or apprenticeships — graduates still, on the whole, enjoy a salary premium across their working life. The most recent analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies found that, on average, this premium added up to £100,000, while those studying medicine or economics could see a boost of up to £400,000 higher than if they had not attended university.

Unfortunately this does not apply for every course at every institution. For example, five years after graduating, men taking creative arts subjects earn less on average than peers with similar GCSEs who did not go to university.

Jacqui Smith, the universities minister, said of the analysis: "Going to university and getting a degree is one of the most transformational things a young person can do. But it is not a universal guarantee of success and not all degrees are equal."

Having said that, some university leavers take several years to find graduate jobs in their chosen field, so data harvested too soon might not give the full picture. Vivienne Stern, chief executive of Universities UK, which represents vice-chancellors, claims the evidence is clear that a university degree still "pays off in a big way for the large majority of people".

She said recently: "The graduate premium is holding up, despite growth in the minimum wage and the generally poor performance of the economy, which has held back wage growth."

A good place to start for those wanting to do their research is the government's Longitudinal Educational Outcomes data, which cross-matches graduate income from tax records with their institution and degree course. Users can search by university, course, GCSE prior attainment, sex, ethnicity and years after graduation. They can see the proportion of graduates in employment and the salary range.

Of course, earnings are not the only reason for going to university. A Ucas survey this year found that about a third of applicants were choosing their degree because of a passion for the subject. Far more cited the need for a specific qualification for their chosen career, but love of learning was a strong motivator for many.

Stern added: "While not all graduates benefit financially to the same extent, it is worth pointing out that some of those graduates who earn lower salaries contribute a lot to society, including those who become artists and performers, whose choice may not have been motivated by money.

"We should recognise that these subjects also feed the creative industries, which are a huge economic driver for the UK. And as a humanities graduate myself my bet is that, in an age of AI, we'll value the understanding of how human beings think and act more, not less, in the future."

> "Earnings are not the only reason for going to university

£400k

The salary boost across working life for those who study medicine or economics, in comparison with if they had not attended university

Concern about the immediate cost of living is leading increasing numbers of students to work while studying. There is also growing awareness of bursaries and charitable support, from inside and outside university. Ucas has created a list of scholarships, grants and bursaries to show what is up for grabs and for whom.

Degree apprenticeships are a fantastic opportunity across engineering, law, finance and other fields, giving a degree-level qualification, a wage and a chance to graduate without tuition fee debt.

The numbers on offer rose 10,000 in one year to 60,000 in 2024-25, but only half of these went to young people and competition is extremely tough for the most prestigious.

Record numbers of school-leavers have applied for the more traditional route of going to university or college this autumn, with institutions making 1.3 million offers to 18-year-olds — 100,000 more than last year. Ninety-nine per cent of the school-leavers who applied by January have received at least one offer.

But applicants considering clearing this morning should not panic: many universities have seen a decline in foreign students so will be keen to fill courses. However, flexibility depends on entry requirements and the popularity of degrees and institutions.

Choosing the right course for you: an insider's guide

Koen Lamberts, vice-chancellor, University of Sheffield

Choosing a university can often feel like an exercise in finding the "best" option. Prospective students today have more information than ever before, from league tables and graduate salaries to student satisfaction and employment data, and that's no bad thing. After all, if you're making one of the biggest decisions of your life, it's right that you have as much information as possible.

But there's one question that matters more than any ranking: where will you be most likely to succeed?

After more than 30 years working in higher education, that's the question I'd encourage every applicant to ask from the outset. The answer won't be the same for everyone, because universities aren't all trying to do the same thing, and students aren't looking for the same experience. Graduate outcomes matter, as does excellent teaching, world-leading research and innovation, and the opportunities a university creates beyond its courses.

At the University of Sheffield, we're proud that our students benefit from each of these, as is evident in our league table rankings and recent National Student Survey scores. They are important indicators of quality, and every university should, of course, be ambitious in delivering them. Yet they can't tell you in isolation whether a particular university is the place where you'll flourish.

That's because what shapes your university experience the most often lies beyond the headline figures. One of the biggest misconceptions is that universities with similar reputations all offer broadly the same experience, which isn't the case. Institutions that sit alongside one another in league tables can differ significantly in their culture and expectations.

Some place particular emphasis on research and others on professional training, while many, including the University of Sheffield, seek to combine academic excellence with a rich student experience. None of these are inherently better than another. But they are different, and understanding those differences is essential to finding the right one *for you*.

Even courses with the same title might be taught in different ways, have different opportunities for work experience, contribute to world-leading research or get into employment.

So, take your time. Visit campuses, speak to current students, find out how you'll be taught, how much contact time you'll have with academic staff and what support is available if things don't go to plan. Ask about placements, opportunities to study abroad, volunteering, student societies and the connections the university has with employers.

> "Courses with the same title might be taught in different ways

Most importantly, picture yourself there. University is about far more than just the qualification you leave with: it's where you gain the confidence to take the next steps in your life, meet people with different perspectives and from different backgrounds, and develop your independence.

It's also worth resisting the temptation to make a quick decision, particularly if you have received an early offer. Choosing a university is a long-term investment in your future, so give yourself the chance to consider your options properly.

Of course, university will not be the right choice for everyone. Andy Burnham, the prime minister, recently set out plans to help young people explore technical education routes from year 10, giving students a range of pathways at an earlier stage, whether academic, technical or vocational.

But crucially, these plans shouldn't be about playing technical, vocational and academic routes against one another, as if one is superior — they are all valuable choices, and what matters is finding the path that is right for you.

This raises an important question about the information available to students more widely, and the important role government plays in this. Young people deserve clear, honest information about all of the pathways available and confidence that any provider who fails to deliver high-quality provision, or misrepresent what they offer, will be held to account.

To do that, we need clarity on what "quality" actually means. In the higher education sector, for example, some university courses are currently branded as "low value", even when there is no nationally agreed definition of what this actually means. We need to take a step back and first reach a national consensus about what we mean by "good value" in higher education.

A shared understanding of value, instead of relying on labels that can oversimplify a complex sector, would provide a much stronger foundation for decisions.

The aim should not be to simply categorise universities more neatly, but to provide prospective students with a clearer understanding of the different roles institutions play, and the opportunities they offer.

Ultimately, there is no single definition of the "best" university because there is no single definition of the "best" student. The right university is the one that will challenge and support you and give you the opportunities to fulfil your potential. Every applicant deserves to have the information that gives them confidence in their decision.

Results day will define you
It's not true that
One moment can change everything
One thing is certain
There is no hope of second chances
We will never believe
The best journeys aren't always planned
Clearing is the moment everything shifts.

Perspective is everything.
Now read from the bottom up.

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Disappointed on results day? Take heart — I've been there

Emily Formstone had her sights set on a gap year and Oxford, until a shock result forced a change of plan

JOSHUA BRATT FOR THE TIMES

Emily Formstone, a Times graduate trainee, survived and thrived after a disappointing A-level result. Below: on graduation day

On the morning of A-level results day I woke from a night filled with the usual bad dreams that plague me on the eve of important news. But this time I didn't experience the sigh of relief when I woke up.

Almost immediately I opened up the dreaded Ucas website, typed in my password and waited for the page to load. "Muuum," I called slowly across the corridor as I saw I had been rejected from my first-choice university. My gut sank. I had been predicted three A*s and was planning on taking a gap year and applying for Oxford. The university I had put as my first choice was merely a placeholder — and even it didn't want me.

I didn't yet know my grades, only that they had to be far below my predicted ones if I had been rejected by my placeholder. For someone from a hard-working friendship group in a high-pressure grammar school, this was devastating. I started calculating the best-case scenario but was imagining the worst. Maybe, as my brother used to say, I had sailed the U-boat, achieving three Us.

I couldn't bury myself in a hole just yet though — I had to collect my results from school. Maybe I just won't go, I thought. Maybe I'll leave Schrödinger's cat tucked away in the box — my results for its litter tray. But I reluctantly threw an oversized jumper over my pyjama shorts, looking a far cry from presentable, and got into the passenger seat of my mum's car like a shy toddler being dragged in to her first day of school.

I cried for the duration of the drive. I sobbed as we parked at the local Sainsbury's. I wept walking up the familiar school stairs. I blubbed in the library, hardly able to tell my name to the woman handing out the brown A4 envelopes. Beneath the crying mess I had become, I hoped that Ucas had made a mistake. It hadn't. Sliding the paper from the envelope I saw my physics grade: the lowest I'd ever received. It was like a black hole on the results paper, a tar on my starry academic record, the thing that was going to ruin my future — or so my 18-year-old self thought.

I was so embarrassed to have worked so hard and to have ended up, in my eyes, as a failure. I had tunnel vision on the physics marks and didn't take a second to celebrate the good grades I'd received in English and maths, or to be grateful for my privileged education.

After I'd (sort of) calmed my tears I was ushered into my English teacher's office. We talked sombrely about how I could keep my Oxford dream alive. I winced as the dreaded words left her lips: "You could retake." They brought into focus a new reality: my gap year ruined, a whole extra year of revision. I lamented my travel plans — seemingly gone in a wisp of smoke — and pictured my best friend's face as I told her she'd have to go alone. My teacher was supportive, encouraging me to submit for a re-mark just in case. In reality I knew I was gearing up for a retake.

With all that excitement before 11am I'm not exactly sure how I spent the rest of the day. There was no celebratory message in the family group chat, no smiling photoshoot with friends, no congratulatory lunch. The calendar left blank for celebrations was a sad void I didn't want to fill.

> My A-level physics grade was the lowest I'd ever got

Eventually, sitting in the bathroom and tired of my own sadness, I thought: "The worst-case scenario I imagined has happened, but I'm still breathing and life is pretty much unchanged from before. The bathroom is the same, my home is the same, my parents are the same." It wasn't a profound thought, but it was comforting. I returned to my bedroom and noticed that the photo of the Radcliffe Camera in Oxford had fallen symbolically from the wall. Determined, I picked it up and replaced it — a sign of my continuing ambition.

Then I sprang into action. I grabbed a flashcard, because I had an abundance of them at the time, and mapped out a timeline for the year: the concrete dates of application deadlines, entrance exams, potential interviews and retakes. I filled in the blanks with periods where I could travel, earn money and revise. Everything was colour coded — I was still in revision mode, after all. I peppered in some motivational quotes for good measure and set down my pen. Maybe this was still possible, I thought, and began to feel remarkably positive. I still have the flashcard, somewhere.

My friends had persuaded me to join them for a results day clubbing bonanza. "Pass or fail, the drinks hit the same," promoters promised. The evening was difficult. I had cried so much throughout the day that my vision was akin to looking through two clouds. The official phrase of the evening seemed to be: "Are you happy?" I wasn't.

What did eventually manage to put a smile on my face was bumping into one of that year's *Love Island* cast members. As I posed for a photo I remembered that, statistically, it was harder to get onto that reality television show than it was to get into Oxbridge. At least that makes one of us, I thought.

Step by step I followed my flashcard timeline and, to my absolute delight, I received an offer to study at Oxford on the condition that I resit physics. I went to India with my best friend and spent the spare moments — on sleeper trains, in questionable hostels and struck down with food poisoning — revising and filling out past papers. Spoiler alert: it worked.

If you're reading this on results day and are in a similar position to me, I'm sorry. I know how you feel — and it's valid to be upset about your results. But you should know that grades mean nothing in themselves, they are simply stepping stones to the next stage of life.

My results day experience, and the year that followed it, made me less afraid of failure and took the pressure off when I did go to Oxford. To fail is liberating, and for me it was a welcome reality check. As my mum sometimes says, it's very boring to be perfect.

Your 'don't panic' checklist

Steps to take if things don't go to plan

Celebrate
Take time to look at what you have achieved.

Speak to your teachers
They can give you advice on grade boundaries, remarks and retakes.

Call clearing
Plenty of friends got onto really great courses through this route, but don't rush into anything for the sake of it.

Talk to others who have been through it
While it may seem as though most people are elated on results day, in reality plenty are disappointed. Speaking to siblings, friends and students from older year groups can be really helpful.

Write down your options
This really helped to clear my mind on a hectic day.

Internships and work experience: what you need to know

In a competitive job market, it's crucial to build your CV while you are studying. By **William Milne**

This year the University of Manchester announced that all undergraduates, regardless of their degree, would be offered a work placement. Why? Because students needed "meaningful real-world experience" to be able to stand out in the fiercely competitive job market awaiting them.

An oversupply of graduates, a stagnant economy and the looming threat of artificial intelligence mean that a degree alone does not offer the edge it once did. At the moment there are more than 700,000 jobless graduates claiming benefits, according to research by the Centre for Social Justice.

While Manchester is the first British university to announce work placements for all, many students have already clocked on to the importance of practical skills. Between 2018 and 2024, the percentage of students who said they had completed at least one internship rose from 39 per cent to 51 per cent, according to the Sutton Trust charity.

Getting experience can feel overwhelming and daunting. Here are some things to bear in mind.

Work experience is designed to help you explore your strengths and try out different industries. Even if you complete an internship that doesn't align with your future career, you will still have learnt transferable skills that will help you to stand out.

Placements can come in all shapes and sizes and many of them are designed to give you a "taster" to see if you are interested. First or second-year students should look out for insight days and "spring weeks", which are most often offered by large corporate firms. These programmes are designed to give you a look into the company and to introduce you to the industry and skills that it typically aligns with. Often they can lead to summer internships.

Applications usually open in late August and close in December or January, so even if you have just started at university, keep your eye out for any interesting opportunities.

MONTY RAKUSEN/GETTY IMAGES

A work placement can give you transferable skills

> 51 per cent of students have completed an internship

If you can, taking a year abroad or opting for a placement year is a great option. These are typically offered to modern languages or business students but can also be available on many other courses.

Talking about when you moved to a new city or country, adapted to a professional environment and gained independence will really help you in future applications. An added bonus is that 44 per cent of placement students return to their placement provider after graduation, according to the Institute of Student Employers.

For those who cannot take a year out, plenty of companies offer summer internships. For some industries — such as financial services — hiring opens nine to twelve months in advance, so it is never too early to be on the lookout.

Work experience can often feel inaccessible. With too many students for too few jobs, companies take advantage by offering unpaid — or underpaid — positions. In 2025, 35 per cent of graduates completed an "unpaid or underpaid" internship, up from 27 per cent in 2018.

While wealthier students can rely on the Bank of Mum and Dad, those who do not have this support can feel locked out from opportunities. But students from lower-income backgrounds can often apply for internship bursaries and travel grants from their university. These bursaries are sometimes not widely advertised, so speak to your career services to see what support you could get.

Alongside the Bank of Mum and Dad is the Connections of Mum and Dad — a parent's old friend giving out month-long stints of employment, for example.

But politely cold-emailing, without any connection to the recipient, is a route that is often overlooked. While it can seem daunting, plenty of companies are willing to offer a week or two (or more!) of experience if you ask for it — particularly for less corporate industries.

Make the most of LinkedIn, too. You will amost certainly find alumni from your university in a number of industries — LinkedIn will highlight your mutual connections when you visit a company profile. Those connections can provide a great starting point.

And while it may seem obvious, make sure to keep your CV up to date, tailor every application, and put time and effort into each cover letter, highlighting your best qualities.

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I'd do it all again — in defence of 'flatcest'

ILLUSTRATION: MARK GRAYSON FOR THE TIMES

Everyone will tell you not to have a romance with your flatmate, but occasionally it's worth it. By **Annie McNamee**

Moving to university, you'll get varied advice about studying, drinking, friendships and laundry, but one piece of wisdom persists above all else: don't sleep with your flatmates. Or, in colloquial terms, avoid "flatcest".

It's a cardinal sin to the extent that people talk about *committing* flatcest. One in four students will do exactly that during their studies, according to the student discount company Student Beans, but what would you expect to happen when you mix a dozen freshly minted 18-year-olds with their first real taste of freedom, communal housing and a bit, or sometimes a lot, of alcohol?

Despite this, the anti-flatcest propaganda goes unchallenged year after year — until now. It's time someone was brave enough to stand up for the age-old tradition and fight against the fearmongering, because for all its risks, intra-flat romance can be quite fun.

Don't think I'm being cavalier. In fact, I'm a veteran. I served my time. I watched the good, the bad and the near dropout-inducing flings, and waded through the trenches myself.

My first bizarre not-even-situationship was in my first term at the University of Bristol. It ended abruptly with me phoning my mum at 3am, crying that I needed to come home. Two confusing, heart-aching months followed. Sharing a living space with the source of my sleepless nights was awful. I often cried to my friends in nightclub toilets.

I avoided using common areas lest we be forced into have an awkward conversation over a boiling pot of pasta. I had no space where I could be sad in peace. Threats to move home were made, lectures for my course in film and English were missed. For a time my world became very small.

My experience is not uncommon. Asking for advice on web forum The Student Room, one user put it simply: "How do I get over him when I live with him?"

Then there are your other housemates — the collateral. Catherine Hodge, 22, was left in an unusual position during her first year at the University of Edinburgh when someone in her halls caught glandular fever, otherwise known as "the kissing disease", from another resident. The corridor went into lockdown to avoid it spreading further. "It was quite funny really because no one batted an eyelid, it wasn't seen as strange," she says.

Eyelids are rarely batted in student halls, where everyone is too distracted by their own chaotic decisions. I would know — in my second term of university I did the only thing more stupid than attempting romance with a flatmate: attempting it again.

With fresh wounds from the first disaster I really did try not to date anyone else I lived with. But after three months of staying up until 3am watching the US series *Riverdale* in my flatmate Nathan's room it became impossible to ignore the fact that we fancied each other. Things went a lot better the second time round, and the relationship made it out of the pressure cooker of first year. Four and a half years later we're still together, and needless to say, I'm glad I gave flatcest a second chance.

Below: Annie McNamee and her boyfriend Nathan shared a flat

Flatcest success stories like mine are abundant. Erin, a 20-year-old student at the University of Bristol, had a similarly wholesome experience beginning a relationship with her now girlfriend/former flatmate. "I did have some concerns about what would happen if it ended badly — we lived with nine people," she admits.

They're soon to celebrate their two-year anniversary.

Nel Roden, 23, has been with her boyfriend since meeting in first-year halls. "Being in close proximity means you get to know each other really well, really quickly," she says. "If you're capable of being adults and agreeing to keep things that shouldn't involve the rest of the house between the two of you, it's actually quite a chill situation."

> "Four and a half years later we are still together

She added that the close quarters of living together take some pressure off the early stages of dating. "Having somebody witness you being a mess in freshers week seems to be conducive to a happy relationship."

Even without a fairytale ending, flatcest needn't be a negative experience. Niamh, 23, a former film student, spent one night with her housemate, a close friend and budding tattoo artist. "It only happened once, and we laugh about it now. She's still my tattoo artist many years later," she said.

Although I don't have tattoos to show for it, I don't regret my disastrous first-term attempt at romance. I learnt from it, and university should be a sandbox where you can make less than perfect decisions while the consequences are relatively small.

So don't fear flatcest. If it knocks on your door in the form of an attractive housemate, exercise your right to be a bit stupid. Learn from my mistakes, then go and make them too.

Don't drink? You can still have plenty of fun at uni. Here's how

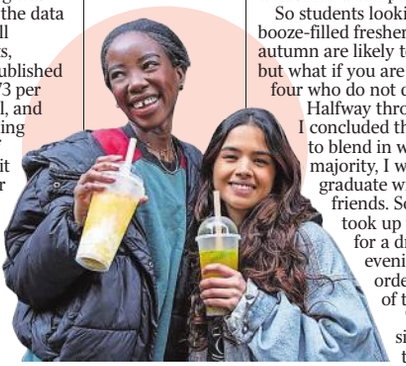
Waseem Mohamed
Graduate trainee

'Pub?" — the one-word question familiar to almost every student. An excursion to the boozer is one of the most important rituals for many of the UK's 2.86 million students.

I remember the first time I was asked out for a drink as a 19-year-old fresher at Durham University. The student newspaper I had just joined held weekly post-meeting socials at a pub in the city centre, and for the first two terms I didn't go.

I saw no reason to force myself into a pub, or to drink at all. For religious reasons I had never (and still haven't) touched alcohol. My generation also seemed to be choosing sobriety, nights in and "boring" hobbies, so I didn't feel I would miss out. But walking through town on any given night quickly dispelled the myth that Gen Z don't drink. It made me question whether not drinking was limiting my social circle, and the data suggests my worries were well founded. The annual Students, Alcohol and Drugs Survey, published in May this year, found that 73 per cent of students drink alcohol, and 78 per cent believe that drinking and getting drunk are part of university culture. Many say it had a positive impact on their ability to socialise: 64 per cent of students said they made new friends during or after drinking alcohol.

The picture with Gen Z students and alcohol is far from straightforward. Different universities take different approaches: while Bradford replaced one of its student bars with an alcohol-free café in 2024, others such as Birmingham, St Andrews and Surrey have recently welcomed a campus Wetherspoons.



Gen Z are more understanding of those who choose soft drinks

So students looking forward to a booze-filled freshers week this autumn are likely to find their crowd, but what if you are among the one in four who do not drink?

Halfway through my first year, I concluded that if I did not try to blend in with the drinking majority, I would probably graduate with very few friends. So eventually I took up the offer of going for a drink one cold evening, and bravely ordered myself a pint of tap water.

To my relief, not a single person either then or since has judged me for not drinking— and my social life was better off for it. The truth is that while most of Gen Z still love a drink, we are also more understanding towards those who choose not to.

Being "sober curious" has become a growing trend for many. During an acute cost of living crisis, regular pints can rack up costs surprisingly quickly — a fact that many of my friends realised as they plunged deeper into overdraft. There is also the health aspect, both physical and mental.

One of the best things about university is that it allows you to mould the person you want to be, and that also applies to how you approach alcohol. It is no longer a given that you need to get yourself blind drunk to be perceived as cool — if anything, staying sober and being able to remember your night out is a more impressive feat.

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Student housing: advice from our rental expert

Choose the right housemates, check out your landlord and know your legal rights, says **Sasha Nugara**

Living in university halls is renting made easy, with all bills included and onsite management. But looking for your second-year pad comes with a reality shock.

Most students end up regretting at least one aspect of their second-year accommodation, whether it's the house, the landlord, the location or the people they live with. And while some grumbles are inevitable, it's important to give yourself the best possible chance of happiness.

A new consideration this year is the Renters' Rights Act, which came into force on May 1. It overhauled rights for tenants — but when it comes to students it gets more complicated.

Follow our tips on student housing to make sure you know your rights and don't rush into anything.

Decide on your deal-breakers and priorities

There's a lot to consider when beginning your search for the second year, whether you're sociable and just want a room or are introverted and want a studio apartment with self-contained amenities.

If you've formed a group with new friends and are looking to live together, going for a privately rented house in multiple occupation (HMO) is the best option but make sure you're all on the same page in terms of budget, location and social boundaries.

For an experience more comparable to upmarket university halls, with amenities, security and bills included, a purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) provider might be more up your street — just be prepared to pay a little more. This could be the perfect option if you've struggled to find your feet or a solid friendship group — PBSAs often have sociable common areas and events.

Know where to look

Start with your student union website, which should have a list of recommended agencies, PBSAs, trusted private landlords and tips tailored to your university town or city. It's also a good idea to check Facebook pages and websites such as SpareRoom.

Lewis Wilson, vice-president for higher education at the NUS England, recommends thorough research. "If you're looking at purpose-built student accommodation make sure you check whether they are accredited by one of the national codes, run by organisations called Unipol or Cubo," he says.

Unipol is a nonprofit organisation that helps to ensure high standards in student housing, while Cubo (College & University Business Officers) is a professional association representing university accommodation managers and other campus service leaders.

COUNTER/GETTY IMAGES

Check your landlord is reliable

While options offered via social media and third-party providers can be more flexible and accommodate lower budgets, they may also be less reliable and leave more room for a negative landlord experience. "Your student union may have an accredited landlord scheme, a contract-checking service or advice on renting — use it," Wilson says. "[It's] there to make sure you have the best time at university, and this is one of the things that's really valuable."

If you do need to raise a complaint against your landlord, from 2028 a mandatory ombudsman service is scheduled to go live as part of the Renters' Rights Act. This will be a free, independent alternative to court proceedings, with legally binding powers.

Don't leave room for mistakes

"When you are moving in, take pictures of everything and make sure your inventory is up to date — especially make sure wear and tear is recorded so that you aren't charged for it by your landlords at the end of the tenancy," Wilson says. He recommends protecting your deposit in a tenancy deposit scheme. "Don't be afraid to challenge deductions from it at the end."

If you have moved into an HMO, make sure you and your housemates have separate contracts and all pay your rent individually to the landlord or agency. Similarly, agree beforehand that if someone drops out it is their responsibility to fill their room. Remember, you've only just met each other and the last thing you want is an unreliable person costing you extra and causing unnecessary stress.

> "Take pictures of wear and tear when you move in

Know your rights

The impact of the Renters' Rights Act for students depends on where you live and who you share with — primarily whether it's an HMO or PBSA, and whether you live with students or non-students.

"Thanks to student campaigning, landlords cannot request more than one month's rent up front or require students to sign up for housing almost a year in advance of moving in," Wilson says.

In the past a student would have signed a fixed-term contract, but all HMOs have now moved to periodic rolling tenancies. This means you need to hand in your notice two months before you leave. It also means you're no longer locked in to living with people you hate — you can leave at any point of the year.

However, to keep the student housing market cyclical, Ground 4A in the act allows a landlord to evict a student household between June 1 and September 30. This is on condition that the landlord gives four months' notice and intends to re-let to students.

The act also introduces a ban on bidding wars and unreasonable rent increases, and a cap on paying rent in advance.

If you're in university-owned accommodation or a PBSA you are exempt from the act, so you will be locked into a fixed-term contract and can pay rent in advance.

Below: Sasha Nugara

What does the loans scandal mean for freshers?

Mary Downer
Money reporter

There has been a fierce debate this year about student loans in England, spearheaded by Times Money's End the Graduate Rip-Off campaign. So what has happened and does it affect those starting university today?

Recent discussions have centred on Plan 2 loans, taken out in England between September 2012 and June 2023, and still issued in Wales. Introduced the same year tuition fees tripled from £3,000 to £9,000, these loans left graduates with an average debt of £53,000, due in part to high interest rates.

Plan 2 interest rates are set at the retail prices index (RPI) plus up to three percentage points, depending on how much a graduate earns. During the years at university, the full three percentage points are applied.

All undergraduate student loans have a repayment threshold, meaning you repay 9 per cent of your income above a certain level. For Plan 2 this threshold was promised to rise in line with average graduate earnings, ensuring loans were only repaid once graduates felt the financial benefits of their degree.

But in last year's budget, chancellor Rachel Reeves announced the Plan 2 threshold would be frozen at £29,385 for three years. This was the third such freeze since the loans were introduced. Had the original £25,000 threshold risen with average earnings, it would now be about £38,000. Instead, graduates are forced to repay sooner than promised, often before they can afford it.

Graduates felt mis-sold. Many didn't know terms could be changed because student loans — including those taken out by new students today — are statutory, not contractual. Any government can therefore retrospectively change the terms.

Department for Education materials told prospective students that repayments would feel like paying a phone bill or buying cinema tickets. They repeatedly promised that the threshold would rise with average earnings, without explaining that it could be frozen.

The situation became a cross-party political flashpoint. In February Lucy Powell, now Andy Burnham's education secretary, labelled the interest "egregious". She has recently said the issue is at "the top of her in-tray". A cross-party parliamentary committee launched an inquiry in March. The committee concluded that if the government were a private company, its behaviour would amount to mis-selling.

Those starting university today will take on the newer Plan 5 loans. While the interest rate is flat RPI, the repayment threshold is just £25,000 — roughly the minimum wage. Like Plan 2, borrowers will repay 9 per cent of earnings above this.

Plan 2 borrowers are dominating headlines because they are now hitting their thirties. They are trying to buy homes and start families but finding themselves held back by debt. For today's Plan 5 students, history may well repeat itself.

What Times writers learnt at

Ignore the swagger – just because someone says they're smart it doesn't mean they are, says Charlotte Ivers

The most important intellectual lesson of my philosophy degree turned out not to be one of allegorical brains in vats or trolleys hurtling towards innocent civilians, but rather a revelation I had one day in the queue for the canteen.

I had been spending an unhappy morning in the run-up to my second-year exams revising formal logic with a boy from my year. Logic had been my lowest grade in the previous year's exams and I was in a bit of a panic. The young man, however, firmly assured me that this was his specialist subject. As a result, I had been looking forward to spending the morning subtly leeching off all of his insights.

The revision session had not gone well. To put it bluntly, I had struggled to understand a word the guy was saying. After several doomed hours glaring at our textbooks, we admitted defeat and headed to get some lunch. While we waited for our rather insipid fish and chips, our conversation turned to the previous year's exams.

My companion informed me proudly that he had actually got 57 per cent in his logic exam. This was a whole 4 percentage points lower than my score, which I had considered to be a shameful indictment of my abilities. My revision buddy, however, explained that he did not view his score as particularly relevant. He was really, *really* good at logic. It had just been a silly paper, asking all the wrong questions in all the wrong ways.

What a revelation. It had never occurred to me before that one could look at the world this way. To my mind, the examiner was the ultimate arbiter of intelligence, and if I had fallen short of his standards, I must therefore be an idiot. My revision companion, however, was deriving his self-esteem from some sort of deep inner well of confidence.

The lesson to take from this is not, of course, that one must be convinced of one's own genius despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary. But it was a good lesson in not allowing the knocks and bumps of academic life to crush your enthusiasm for a subject.

> Don't allow the knocks of academic life to crush your love of your subject

Even more importantly, it was a lesson in ignoring the boasts and swagger of those around me. I'd spent much of my first two years at university panicking about the seeming genius of others. But that day in the canteen everything changed. I learnt a lesson that still serves me today: just because someone tells you that they are very smart, it doesn't mean that they are.

My mum talks about having this experience too, during her mathematics degree in the 1980s. She arrived at university to find herself surrounded by uber-confident men and promptly decided that she was a dimwit. She then went on to beat them all in her first-year exams. Her conclusion was that her course mates derived their self-assessment from looking at the 90 per cent of things they could do, while she was looking at the 10 per cent of things that she couldn't. Neither practice, of course, is entirely healthy. Somewhere in the middle there is the perfect balance. One day, with any luck, I hope to find it.

Charlotte Ivers now and, below, at university

Venture off campus and engage with real life in your new home

There's a whole world out there. Use your time and freedom to start exploring it now, says Ben Machell

The great thing about being a student is that, academic work aside, it's very easy. Everything is laid on for you: accommodation, weekly schedules, social events, alumni hoodies, political views... it's like joining a benign cult in which you and thousands of people very much like you live highly regimented, near-identical lives at a significant remove from mainstream society.

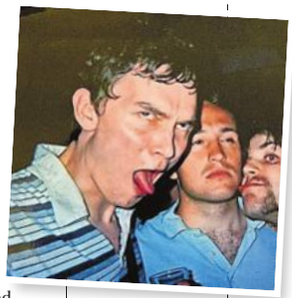
I'm not saying this is a bad thing. In fact, for the first few weeks or months, it's quite helpful when it comes to settling in. There is something comforting about spending yet another Tuesday night scamming yet more free pizza off your halls of residence's Christian Union by pretending you have a tentative interest in the gospels, or going on mass fancy dress pub crawls, or forming five-a-side teams for student leagues. It's what you're supposed to do. You'll make good friends. You might accidentally find God.

But then, probably midway through your second term, you will have a *The Matrix* moment. Much like Keanu Reeves in the sci-fi classic, you will start to suspect that the reality in which you exist is perhaps not real at all, but just a comforting simulation. When this moment comes, I urge you to open your eyes — to take the red pill — and see that there is a big, vibrant, somewhat frightening but ultimately exciting world that exists just beyond your campus, and to go and explore it rather than letting yourself drift along via the comfortable inertia of undergraduate life.

The fact is, when you go to university you have a huge amount of freedom and a huge amount of time, particularly if you're doing an arts degree. Don't waste that time by spending the next three years confining yourself to a student ghetto.

Instead, start practising for life beyond higher education by attempting things that nobody has asked you to do. Form terrible bands. Put on and promote club nights that absolutely nobody comes to. Make connections in your new city that have nothing to do with your university.

Interested in politics? Find like-minded locals rather than fellow students. Didn't make the university netball squad? Find a local team instead. Have particular professional ambitions? Start sniffing out work experience or summer jobs now. Want to be, I dunno... a journalist? Why write for your student rag when there might be local papers being produced a few miles from where you live? Just because you're at university doesn't mean you have to be a student.



Ben Machell, left, and above with uni friends

But you will notice that, the closer you get to graduating, the more "studenty" many of your peers will become. They will be desperately, decadently studenty because they're afraid of what's coming next, which is to say, a lack of structure, a need for personal initiative, responsibility and experience. In other words, they're afraid of impending reality. But you? You won't be. Because that's where you'll already live.

uni — outside their lectures

SANE SEVEN, SONJA HORSMAN FOR THE TIMES

Don't take student politics too seriously — have a good time

Free condoms, laser tag and friends for life: **Sebastian Payne** looks back on the proudest wins of his stint in the junior common room

Two words, famously, should never go together: students and politics. Yet when I arrived in Durham in 2007, the yearn for elected office pulled at my Topman collar. Instead of signing up to the Conservative society — all port and loud banging of tables — I went for the more municipal option of the junior common room. This was the student-run body responsible for services within my college, the brutalist edifice of Van Mildert College. Making a real difference to the student experience, I thought — there could be no more noble pursuit.

My first effort ended in failure when I ran for the illustrious position of JCR secretary, the chief notetaker. My second, for vice-president, was a triumph as no one opposed me. Unlike Robert Jenrick, I did not suffer the humiliation of being beaten by the perennial candidate Ron (reopen nominations). As per Van Mildert's tradition, victory was celebrated with a "kazu": kicking a full can of Coke down the college stairs and pouring it over your head, followed by a yard of alcohol. Choosing vodka and tonic over, say, a yard of ale was an early mistake.

Taking up office at the start of my final year, my responsibilities were suitably fluid. I deputised for the president, a paid-for graduate. But I was in charge of college discipline, which included the tantalising power to fine naughty students. The first time I sought to exercise it, during a formal dinner for the sports societies, I encountered the hulking rugby captain carrying 25 shots into the dining hall. "You know you're not going to stop me and I know you're not either, so how about you step aside mate?" he said, smiling.

Sebastian Payne, left. Above: on duty at Durham circa 2009

I had more success with one group who destroyed an interior wall with a sofa after a particularly raucous night out. When I hauled them up to the senior tutor, their excuse was "Durham's nightclubs close too early and we had too much energy." They were all duly banned from living in college again.

Each week, we elected figures sat through interminable executive meetings. The policy matters debated were serious. One meeting was devoted to the question of condoms and whether the JCR should increase its free supplies to encourage safer copulation — to which one exec member responded: "I don't need them, I have sex like a real man."

The executive's work was frequently complicated by the Fleetwood Mac-inspired intertwining relationships between its various members. Meetings were frequently thrown off course based on who had been sleeping with whom; screaming matches occurred between vying lovers. In the days before WhatsApp, the best way of finding out who was having an affair was who looked the most tired. Add in the fact that everyone was hungover most of the time and it's amazing we agreed to anything. Attendance was ropey, as some saw the exec as a CV booster. Others viewed it as a useful way of avoiding studying.

The wisest words of all were once uttered by the college bar steward. Whereas everyone else was some degree of nerd, he was a full-blown jock — a man who would take pints to late-night gym workouts. After one long discussion about whether the JCR should register as a charity he snapped: "Listen, we're all gonna be gone from here in two years' time and no one will remember us or anything we did. So can we all shut the f*** up and just get on and do something?" We didn't and he was right.

Was it worth it? The JCR gave me some of the best friends of my life: the president I deputised for was my groomsman and vice versa. We did do some good: we hosted the best balls the college had seen in years, complete with laser tag, B*Witched and a Radio 1 DJ. We ran a riotous Christmas do for the college staff and their children. We kept pints of Kronenberg at £1.60. We made Van Mildert the most fun college. And we never, ever discussed the 2010 general election. The biggest lesson I learnt: don't take politics at university seriously. Just go for a good time.

Sticky, stuffy and boring... what's to like about clubbing?

Everyone else loved it, so what was I missing? **Cindy Yu** on finding her groove away from the dancefloor

I tried to like clubbing, I really did. At my uni town there were enough clubs for each night of the week: Tuesdays were at Cellar, Wednesdays at Parkend, Thursdays Bridge, and on it goes. From freshers week on it seemed that the expectation was set: after every evening social event, there would be clubbing to top off the night. Faithfully I traipsed along with my new-found friends.

But I found it a torturous kind of nightcap. The dingy venues were inevitably sticky and stuffy, made worse by the dozens of sweaty strangers all sardined together. We girls were lucky if we didn't get an unwelcome hand reaching out to cop a feel. The music could be good — if you got the right night — but more often than not a DJ who thought they were David Guetta would ruin it with a dissonant remix.

So on these nights it wouldn't be long before I'd seek the sanctuary of the smoking area. I don't even smoke, but at least there you could get some air, have a chat and actually meet some of the people you were dancing with. I found that a more civilised environment than the dancefloor.

I couldn't understand how everyone else seemed so into clubbing. Was this really the pinnacle of millennial socialising? As a social science student, I started working on a theory that it was a case of the emperor's new clothes — peer pressure was enough to get everyone on board and raving, but I suspected that there were more not enjoying it than would admit it.

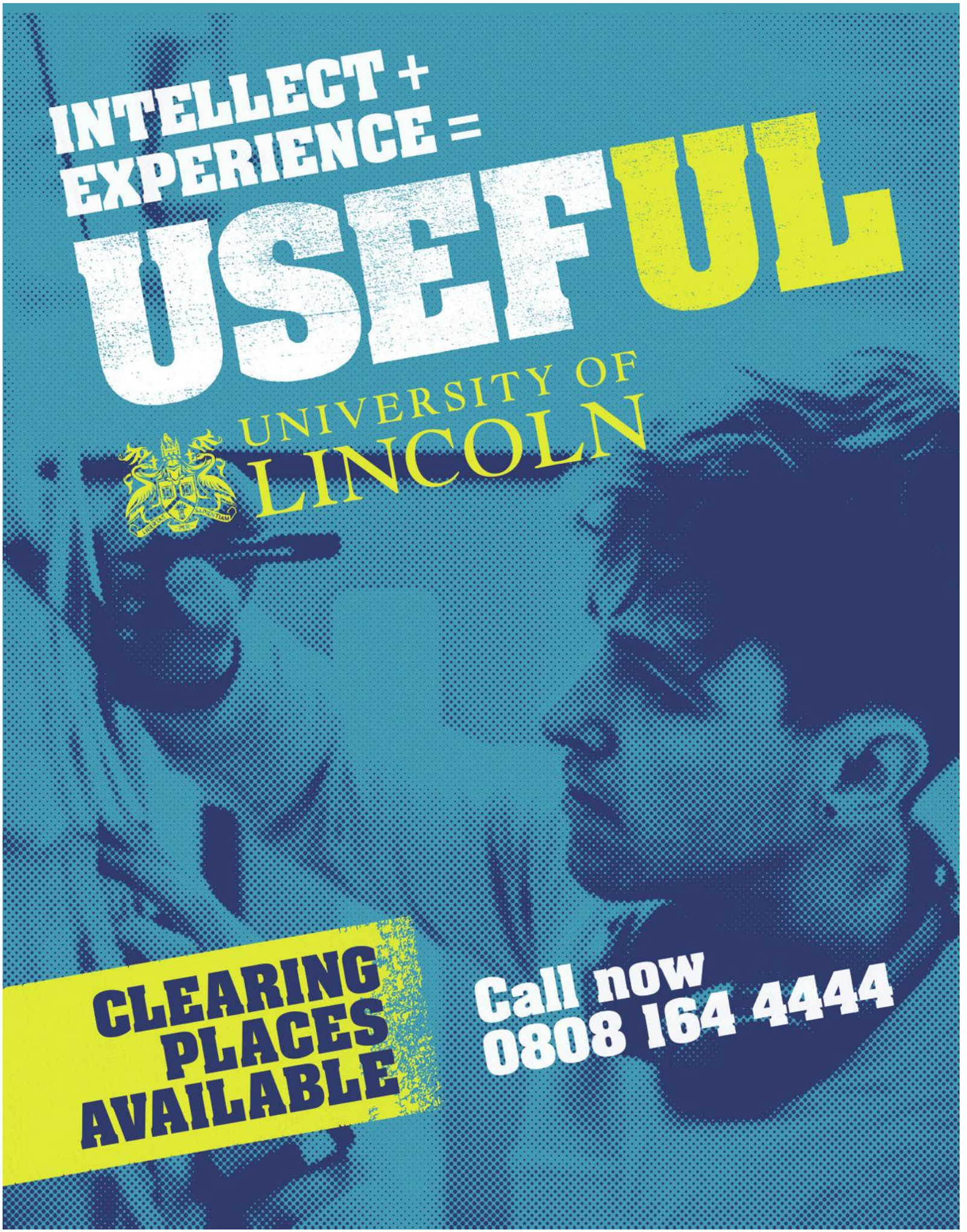
Cindy Yu. Above: as a student at Oxford

Whatever the case, eventually it felt so silly that I was going to clubs just to hang out in the smoking area that I went less and less. And that felt good — simply to accept that just because something is mainstream and "what people do" doesn't mean I have to like it, or do it too.

Some of my friends continued to go clubbing, and that's fine, but we also started exploring other stuff to do. We went paintballing with some vouchers a guy was giving out on the high street. We joined a go-karting competition. We tried out ice hockey. We brought crappy cheeses to the wine tasting society and did not spit out. Looking back, the people who were there at those times are still my closest friends from university today.

So to make the most of university, try out those quirky hobbies and meet those quirky people. It's a time for learning who you are and what you like. Whether that's clubbing or not, the most important lesson is just to be yourself.

> "I would seek the sanctuary of the smoking area. I don't even smoke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What you need to know about finances

How to get through uni without breaking the bank. By senior money reporter **Megan Harwood-Baynes**

SOLSTOCK/GETTY IMAGES

It's more than a decade since I hit up freshers week but the financial hangover of being a student can last for ever.

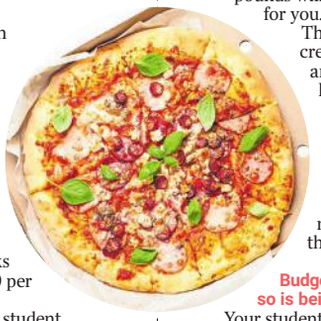
Surprisingly, given my job as a money reporter, I wasn't great with money in my twenties. I wouldn't have known a budget if it slapped me in the face and I was on first-name terms with the local Domino's delivery man. My finances were kept afloat through sheer luck and burning the candle at both ends with multiple part-time jobs.

Here is the financial survival guide I wish someone had told me on day one — even if the 19-year-old me would probably have ignored it.

Your student loan won't cover everything

The amount of student maintenance loan you get will be between £4,013 and £14,135. It will vary depending on if you live at home (you get less), where in the UK you are from (each country has its own funding body), your household income (if your parents earn more, you get less, and vice versa) and where you are going for your degree (you get more if it's in London).

The average maintenance loan in 2024-25 (the most recent figures available) was £7,678. This is usually paid in three instalments, one at the start of each term, so it will seem like a lot when it hits your account, but it works out at roughly £640 per month.



With the average student spending £1,142 per month on essential living costs, according to Save the Student, you are already facing a £502 shortfall before you even hit the student bar. Some students can rely on their parents to plug the gap but many need to take on a part-time job to stay afloat. It's helpful to know that there is a gap so you can plan and avoid turning to credit cards or loans.

You do have to pay back what you borrow

Some bank accounts will offer an interest-free overdraft to students, which means if you go below zero, you won't incur any fees. This can feel tempting and a lot like free money — it's not. Slipping into the red is just making life harder for your future self. It might be interest-free but it is still debt.

After you graduate, your bank will typically transition you to a graduate account, giving you up to three years to clear the debt before you incur fees and interest. But you are already graduating into a tricky jobs market, with expensive rent and lower-than-average starting salaries. To do all this while paying back thousands of pounds will make life harder for you.

The same applies to credit cards, short and long-term loans, and buy-now-pay-later. All of it is real money, and the cheapest way to avoid having to pay it back is to never take it out in the first place.

Budgeting is boring but so is being skint

Your student loan lands at the end of September and suddenly you have more money in your account than you've ever had before. What's one more takeaway, an extra round of drinks or an order from TikTok Shop?

It can be so easy to burn through this money before October's reading week, but you are just setting yourself up for a painful end of term. When your student loan hits, take the figure and divide it into the number of months you have to make it last (or weeks if that is easier). Transfer the majority of the loan away into a separate account and pay yourself in instalments (digital banks like Monzo and Starling with their multiple "pots" are good for this).

Draw up a basic budget to figure out how much you have to spend on rent, food, university supplies — but don't forget to give yourself some fun money. Budgeting is boring but so is eating plain pasta for a month.

Master the arts of charity shopping and fakeaways

Hunt down a deal

You are a thrifty student now, so time to start acting like it. Charity shops and Vinted have some of the best bargains, or organise a clothes swap with your flatmates if you are feeling bored by your wardrobe. It's better for the planet and better for your wallet.

> "Budgeting is boring, but so is eating plain pasta

Your student discount is your ticket to some great freebies. Ten per cent off at Boots and Asos, free Microsoft Office and Prime Student, to name just a few. Before making a big purchase, take 24 hours to deliberate. First check if there are any discounts available, then give yourself time to decide if you really want something.

You can also score free food from nearby shops using apps like Olio or look on local Facebook groups for furniture bargains. Too Good to Go, an app designed to minimise waste, can be a way to access cheap food at the end of the day. I once fed three people with a £2.99 bag from Toby Carvery but it does come with the risk you'll get three boxes of coleslaw, so pick your surprise bags wisely.

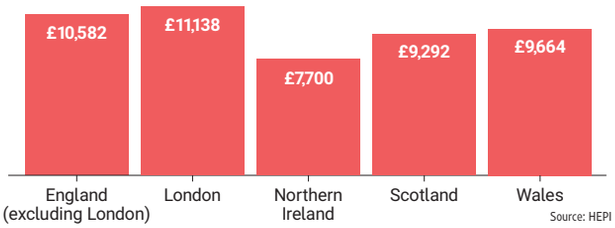
Master the fakeaway and don't buy rounds

We've all done it, but don't buy rounds, especially not on your first few nights out with your new flatmates. It can quickly become costly and is very rarely reciprocated in the earlier days when you don't know people very well.

Love a coffee? Invest in a good at-home option and a solid takeaway coffee cup. And keep your freezer stocked with frozen pizza for the end of a night out — I promise you, after that many Jägerbombs it tastes just as good as a takeaway, is a fraction of the price and you can cook it in the same time it takes for a Domino's to arrive at your door. Just don't fall asleep while it is in the oven.

Maintenance loans leave a spending shortfall

Shortfall between average maintenance loan provided and average funds needed, depending on where an English student attends university



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How to survive first-year student halls

Tidy up, don't hide in your room, and talk about any problems, advises recent graduate **Callum Martin**

It is the best, the scariest and, in many ways, the most bizarre part of going to university. A group of total strangers who haven't lived away from home before thrown together at random for a year of forced cohabitation.

If you're reading this as an incoming first-year, in a little over a month's time you're likely to be unlocking the door to your student accommodation for the first time. Excited, probably. Nervous, definitely. The good news is that everybody feels that way. I certainly did. And, having graduated from the University of Exeter last summer, it was just a few short years ago that I was in the same boat as you.

I had a great time in halls, but there are plenty of things I wish I'd known going in. In sharing them here, I'm hoping you won't have to learn any lessons the hard way.

Do... move in early

Most accommodation opens the weekend before freshers week. There are obvious practical benefits to arriving early, such as having first dibs on cupboards or fridge space, but the main advantage is a social one. Moving in is nerve-racking enough without being the person who shows up last on a Sunday night, the newcomer to a group who have had the weekend to get to know each other.

ZEISS BATIS/GETTY IMAGES

The novelty of living in a landfill wears off quickly

Of the ten students in my flat I was one of three to move in on Friday, and quickly bonded with my fellow early birds, settling the nerves before everyone else arrived. If you have the choice, dive right in by getting there as early as you can.

Don't... hide in your room

This should not be read as "you need to go out". If drinking and clubbing aren't your thing that's absolutely fine. I know plenty of people who did halls sober and had a great time. But even if you're not a partier get out of your room and chat to people as much as you can — as early as you can. Yes, it can be scary at first, but people form attachments quickly in their first year and you'll regret not doing it.

Do... pack wisely

Beyond the obvious packing list there are a few items I'd consider must-haves. A doorstop to show you're friendly and happy to chat; a comfortable topper for your mattress, given the strain likely put on it by previous inhabitant; for similar reasons, noise cancelling headphones are a wise inclusion. But it is equally important not to overpack. There is limited space in student accommodation, and filling the kitchen with useless clutter is a good way to make yourself unpopular. If you are unlikely to use it daily, think hard about bringing it. Seriously, you do not need a bread-maker.

Don't... rush into a second-year contract

This is a common mistake, especially in smaller cities where the unstoppable force of high student numbers meets the immovable object of low housing stock.

There is a culture of panic around locking in second-year accommodation, and conversations often begin as early as freshers week. Many sign a contract in the first six weeks only to realise soon after that they don't like the people they have agreed to live with.

Obviously you don't want to wait around for too long, but neither should you sign on for the sake of it. If you ignore the noise, some of the best deals can hit the market during the second term.

Do... tidy up

There's a strange romanticism to the idea of the student flat being a tip and, indeed, by week three most look as if they've been hit by a hurricane followed by a plague of alcoholic locusts. But the novelty of living inside a landfill wears off quickly. Nobody likes the person who leaves their dirty dishes festering for days or clogs the sink and does a runner.

Like many flats we opted for a cleaning rota, which went a long way. But at the very least, clean up after yourself.

Don't... think your flatmates have to be your best friends

As great as it would be, the administrators sorting university accommodation do not match people by personality. In fact, I once spoke to one who told me that when they got bored they used to fill an entire flat with men called John.

It's a total lottery, and while I got lucky, not everybody does. That's fine. You should approach everyone with an open mind, but if it becomes clear over weeks that you don't get on with someone, don't try to force a square peg into a round hole.

> The university accommodation officers do not match people by personality

Stay civil, stay friendly, and don't let it get you down. There's a whole world beyond your flat door.

Do... address issues head on

Even if your flat gets on brilliantly, there will be clashes. Living in close proximity it is impossible to avoid some conflicts: your flatmate never takes the bins out; they got back drunk and left the front door open; they smoked a cigarette in their room and set off the fire alarm at 4am.

In my experience, the best way to deal with issues is quickly, calmly and (ideally) in person. There's nothing worse than a passive-aggressive message to the group chat.

Don't... (immediately) hook up with your flatmates

Many of your older friends will give you this advice. You will nod and you will tell them that you'd never be that stupid. And then you will do it anyway. Trust me.

The nothing-matters-it's-freshers-week attitude has its appeal, but the first year is a marathon not a sprint, and you don't want months of awkward encounters around the breakfast table.

I've heard endless horror stories. People who've been forced to move out when it got too messy. People who cheated on their flatmates... with other flatmates. Even a student flat that had a marriage during its lifespan (there was a subsequent divorce). You'd be unlucky for it to go that wrong, but it's still one to avoid.

ALAMY

‘People would comment about my accent’

Research shows some elite institutions are falling back on access for the disadvantaged. By **Marieta Marinova**

“The myth about university life is that once students secure a place, everyone competes on a level playing field,” says Lee Elliot Major, professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter. In reality, he adds, “many students from less advantaged backgrounds encounter a dense web of cultural, social and financial barriers” that determine who flourishes and who falls behind.

Major, the UK’s first professor in the field, believes there are “hidden class codes” around “cultural fluency” that students have to navigate without ever being taught. In a survey last year of 10,000 state-educated students by The 93% Club, a networking charity, almost nine out of ten said that there was a divide between state-educated and privately educated students on campus.

This divide is made worse by shrinking rates of participation from people of lower socioeconomic backgrounds at the most selective institutions. A Times analysis of figures for England from the Office for Students found that between 2021 and 2024 representation of students from “low participation areas” (places with few people in higher education) increased at 82 of the 120 institutions with comparable data. But at England’s Russell Group universities — a self-selecting group of elite institutions — 13 of 20 recorded a falling share of entrants from low participation areas.

Katy Hampshire of the Sutton Trust, a social mobility charity, says that while participation from lower socioeconomic backgrounds has widened nationwide, little to no progress has been made at the most elite institutions.

For those who do manage to get to university from a lower socioeconomic background, the experience brings its own challenges. According to The 93% Club’s survey, 51 per cent of students said that they faced derogatory remarks or jokes about their accent or mannerisms, rising to 71 per cent for those hailing from the north.

Last year, Kara Evans graduated from the University of Warwick, where just 4.2 per cent of entrants came from low participation areas in 2024. “University was the tipping point for me where I realised that my background was going to play a big factor in my life going forward,” she says.

Evans, 22, grew up in a single-parent household in Dudley, near Birmingham. As the first in her family to go to university, she was excited to start her politics and international studies course. But she soon found her accent became a subject of mockery. While her lectures were going well, seminar environments felt toxic and “dominated by people’s comments about my accent. Some points I was making were being ignored,” she says. “But then someone from a different background would make the same point and they would be applauded for it.”

Morenike Odetoyinbo, 21, is entering her third year at the University of Bristol. Also studying politics, she often notices peers acting with a sense of entitlement during seminars, and says that this is “the nature of the system”. “Male private school voices tend to be a bit louder. It’s not that they speak over you, but they think their opinion is right because they’ve probably always been told it is.”

While that never stopped Odetoyinbo from fully participating, Evans had a more difficult time. She remembers getting asked to repeat herself or being corrected for how she pronounced certain words. Evans stopped going to some of the seminars during her first year, and considered dropping out entirely.

At Russell Group universities 42 per cent of working-class students have considered dropping out, not due to academic challenges, but because they felt out of place, according to The 93% Club. “I didn’t feel like I had a place at that university, coming from my background,” Evans says. Some tutors and lecturers “made it fairly clear that I was the odd one out.”

Odetoyinbo, who grew up in south London, says she has made many friends at university, but has noticed that “different social enclaves and groups don’t really mix”. She adds that institutional attempts to address these issues sometimes miss the mark. Her university tried connecting students with similar backgrounds through targeted mailing lists, “but I didn’t really want to meet up and talk about how I’m the first person [in my family] at university.”

While race and gender are protected under the Equality Act, accent and class are not, leaving students unable to formally address these issues.

Evans never reported her struggles, fearing she would seem “dramatic”. Instead, she altered the way she dressed and spoke — 56 per cent of those surveyed by The 93% Club also said they felt pressured to change their accent to fit in. She says these changes harmed her identity and strained friendships back home, where her school peers made fun of her for sounding “posher”.

Major suggests that more staff training is needed to recognise class bias. Hampshire, meanwhile, points to the progress that has been made, with universities having more diverse student ambassadors and role models.

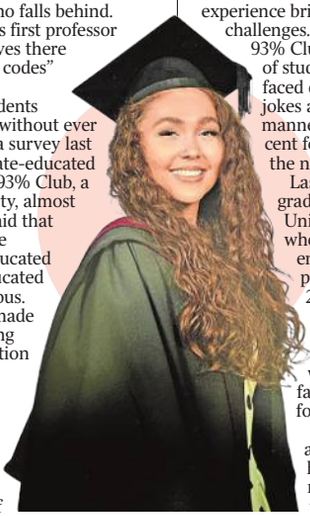
Odetoyinbo, like many students, also worries about securing work experience during her studies after she heard of people doing internships through their parents or their parents’ connections. In The 93% Club’s survey, 88 per cent said they had witnessed nepotism in decisions over who gets internships and job offers.

“It worries me that I’m falling behind because I don’t have those connections,” Odetoyinbo says.

For those about to start university, Hampshire says: “There will be and should be networks and places that support you to thrive. You deserve a place at this university as much as any other person there. If you’re from a lower-income background, organisations like the Sutton Trust will have resources and support to help you think about how to get your internship, how you network and the skills you need.”

A spokesperson for the University of Warwick, where Evans studied, said they were “sorry to hear about this student’s experience” and highlighted its social inclusion strategy. “We aim to create an environment in which every student can participate and contribute confidently, regardless of their background or circumstances.”

The University of Bristol said: “Our priority is to ensure all students feel welcome, respected, supported, and empowered to succeed at university.”

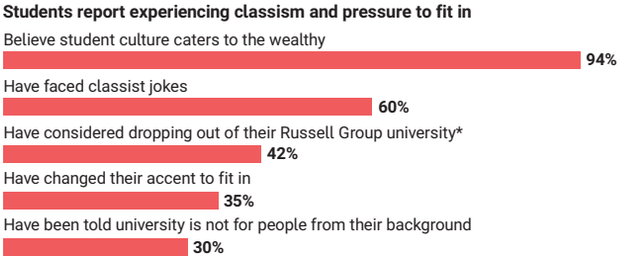


Bristol student Morenike Odetoyinbo Left: Kara Evans

> “Male private school voices tend to be a bit louder

Class divide on campus

Students report experiencing classism and pressure to fit in



*not due to academic challenges, but because they feel they don’t belong

Source: 93% Club

Little progress on widening access

The share of students from low-participation areas remains low at many Russell Group universities, despite some institutions performing better than others

	Share 2024-25	Change from 2021
Biggest decreases		
University of Exeter	4.8%	▼ 1.5
University of Oxford	4.5%	▼ 1.3
University of Southampton	7.7%	▼ 0.8
Biggest increases		
University of York	9.4%	▲ 0.2
University of Liverpool	6.9%	▲ 0.5
University of Manchester	5.8%	▲ 0.7

Source: Office for Students

ILLUSTRATION: MARK GRAYSON FOR THE TIMES

Ear plugs! Door stops! What to bring to uni (and what to ditch)

Nine students tell us what they really used, and what they could have lived without. By **Mashaal Hussain**

Freshers season is almost here, bringing the annual question: what do you actually need to take to university? Between overpacked suitcases, last-minute shopping trips and well-meaning advice from parents, preparing to move out for the first time can feel overwhelming.

Packing essentials vary hugely too — from air fryers and other kitchen gadgets to how many clothes you really need. One student's must-haves can quickly become another's unused cupboard clutter.

So we asked UK students what they really used, what they wish they'd packed and what they would leave at home if they could do it all again. Here are their top tips.

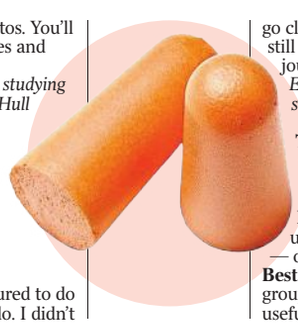
Take Earplugs. Lots of them. Student accommodation has thin walls and life is noisy. Whether that's your flatmate coming in at 3am or a location on a busy street.
Don't take Expensive mugs and bowls. Everything breaks. I took a set of patterned cutlery because it's easy to identify, unlike standard silver, which gets mixed up or goes missing.
Best advice Go to society events and taster sessions, attend all of your academic welcome workshops and make time for the gym. Don't be afraid to text your flatmates to see if they want to go for a coffee or a pint. It gets easier, I promise.
Robert Medhurst, 25, studied business at Nottingham Trent University

Take Painkillers and medications (you will get ill). Paracetamol was my best friend during freshers week.
Don't take Summer clothes, plants or too many decorations.
Best advice Socialise as much as you can. Making friends takes effort. Speak to people on your course and people you see around campus. Don't be nervous — compliment their outfit or something simple and start a conversation.
Julia Gamryd, 20, studying psychology and criminology at City St George's, University of London

Take Your passport, especially if you plan to get a job. It's a hassle to travel home if you forget it — that's what happened to me!
Don't take Clothes for every season. You can swap them during the Christmas and Easter holidays and you'll buy more during term time.
Best advice Homesickness is normal, but it does get easier. Everyone is new and figuring things out together. Don't worry if you don't click with your flatmates either — some people find their closest friends elsewhere.
Soyana Devi Sapkota, 19, studying medicine at the University of Bristol

Take A card or drinking game, a great way to break the ice in the first weeks.
Don't take Your best jackets — they're likely to get lost in club cloakrooms and on nights out.
Best advice Don't ever eat dinner in your bedroom. The best moments and conversations with flatmates usually happen in the kitchen.
Zara McIntosh, 22, studied mass communications with advertising, branding and PR at Edinburgh Napier University

Take Batteries and a mattress topper.
Don't take An air fryer — wait and see if someone else brings one first!
Best advice Take lots of photos. You'll never regret having memories and moments to look back on.
Sujay Nanu jr. Sukumaran, 21, studying medicine at the University of Hull



Take Photos and trinkets from home to make your space feel personal.
Don't take Pans that don't work. Check whether your accommodation uses an induction hob before buying kitchenware.
Best advice Don't feel pressured to do anything you don't want to do. I didn't go clubbing during freshers week and still had a great time. This is your journey, so do what feels right.
Ellie Louise, 22, studying social sciences at King's College London

Take A door stopper, extension cords and a room diffuser (or plug-in air freshener).
Don't take A printer — you can use the university library instead — or an ironing board.
Best advice Make sure to create a group chat with your flatmates. It's useful for organising cleaning rotas and planning social activities like game nights.
Rafa Yusuf, 21, studying pharmacy at the University of Kent

> Don't take an air fryer, see if someone else brings one first

Take Indoor shoes such as flip-flops or sliders for the shower and around the flat (floors can get dirty).
Don't take Too much kitchenware. Three plates, bowls and sets of cutlery is more than enough. The same goes for cookware: two pots and one frying pan will cover most meals.
Best advice Set ground rules early with your flatmates and learn when to let small issues go to avoid unnecessary tension.
Thea Loth, 24, studying film and television, drama and theatre at Aberystwyth University

Take Washing machine pods, small, stackable storage boxes and hangers.
Don't take Too many clothes (especially items you'll only wear once) or too many shoes.
Best advice Put yourself out there, even if you're not outgoing. Be brave. Don't just rely on your flatmates for friends, talk to everyone – and keep your space tidy.
Blythe Eling, 19, studying fashion communications with business studies at the University of Brighton

The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide rankings 2026

2026 rank	2025 rank	University	Teaching quality %	Student experience %	Research quality %	Entry standards (pts)	Graduate prospects %	Good honours %	Continuation %	People and planet %	Total
1	1	London School of Economics	85.1	85.1	68	185	92.5	90.6	97.6	68.1	1,000
2	2	St Andrews	89.3	86.9	53.8	208	87.6	90.6	98	38	933
3	5	Durham	87	82.2	55.9	178	88.8	90.5	96.8	55.6	906
4=	4	Cambridge	85	75.7	69.7	210	90.4	92.1	98.4	37.2	903
4=	3	Oxford	85.7	73.4	67	197	90.4	93	97.6	51.5	903
6	6	Imperial College London	83.1	82.8	73.9	196	95.9	91.4	96.2	49.1	890
7	8	Bath	84.6	85.2	53	171	88.7	88.4	97.2	57.2	861
8	9	Warwick	85.6	84.1	60.9	170	86.4	84.8	95.3	47.5	839
9	7	University College London	82.3	81	66.8	172	87.5	90.5	96.1	67.2	837
10	11	Bristol	82.8	81	66.2	168	83.7	87	97.2	60.8	814
11	20	Strathclyde	86.3	84.3	53.1	204	83	82.9	91.7	40.8	803
12	10	Loughborough	84.4	85	52.5	153	86.3	84	96.5	52.5	802
13	14	Sheffield	87.3	87	59.1	157	82.9	82.8	96.1	46.1	800
14	13	Exeter	82.4	81.3	57.5	153	81.9	86.5	96.2	70.9	790
15	12	Lancaster	85.5	83.5	57.4	144	82.1	82.1	95.1	53.5	775
16	22	Birmingham	83.7	82.1	61.9	151	84.2	83.4	94.6	50.7	765
17	19	Southampton	84.1	82.3	60.1	148	84.3	83.4	95.5	47.6	763
18	23	Liverpool	85.3	85.6	55.6	141	82	83.1	93.8	58.7	749
19	24=	King's College London	81.1	78.5	64.2	164	85.1	84.7	94.5	66.4	748
20	17=	York	82.7	79.9	62.8	148	82.7	79.9	96.5	46.3	742
21	26	Queen's Belfast	84.1	83	52	154	87.1	77.4	93.8	60.1	740
22	16	Glasgow	80.1	75.8	61.2	210	82.3	85.1	93	32.3	735
23=	15	Aberdeen	85.7	84	38.7	182	82.2	82.5	92.3	34.7	727
23=	36	Dundee	87.2	81.3	51.1	184	83	82	91.6	29.4	727
25	17=	Edinburgh	77.7	75.1	61.5	194	81.3	90.8	95.6	37.7	725
26	29	Leeds	81.6	81	57	156	81	85.3	95.1	54.7	720
27	27=	Manchester	81.2	79.5	64.4	159	80.8	83.7	95.6	49.3	713
28=	32	Cardiff	83	81.8	56.7	146	85.1	77.5	94.7	53.8	712
28=	27=	Leicester	85.8	85.7	53.6	126	81	76.4	94.8	54.5	712
30	30=	Nottingham	83.2	80.8	56.1	151	83.3	79.2	95.7	44.6	710
31	21	Surrey	87.1	84.2	53.3	133	83.7	74.7	92.1	37.2	699
32	34	Royal Holloway, London	83.8	83.1	53.6	128	78.7	77.1	93	47.2	687
33	24=	Reading	83.4	81.9	51.1	121	80.4	77.8	91.7	74	685
34	30=	Newcastle	80.9	79.9	53.6	143	82.4	81.5	93.3	59.3	679
35	39	Queen Mary, London	82	79.8	58.7	150	78.6	83.5	92.5	49.9	672
36	44	Glasgow Caledonian	84.1	81.5	38.5	166	81.2	83.3	89	58.8	669
37	37	Swansea	85.2	83	47.5	123	81	78.1	91.4	64.9	664
38	46=	Manchester Metropolitan	87	84.3	43.7	127	71.6	79.6	89.6	73.6	659
39	51	Heriot-Watt	80.7	78.8	48.7	172	82.8	80.6	89	37.7	656
40	33	East Anglia	84.1	82	58	128	81	76	92.2	42.2	653
41	35	Aston	83.8	82.1	40.9	126	82.6	74.4	93.2	52.8	652
42	48	Aberystwyth	89.1	85.1	38.7	115	72.4	73.1	92.3	60.6	635
43	57=	Keele	85.4	82.6	42	119	78.6	79.7	92.2	55.9	630
44	46=	Essex	86.4	84.2	50	130	72.1	78.8	88	55.4	629
45	38	Sussex	84.1	83.2	52.9	130	73	74.1	91.8	48.7	624
46	42	Nottingham Trent	86.7	84	41.9	114	71.5	72.9	92.3	66.7	623
47	43	Northumbria	83.8	82.4	40.6	128	78.4	78.2	87.4	70.4	622
48	49	City St George's	82.9	80.6	51	130	84.9	77.8	89.9	55.5	621
49	45	Ulster	86.1	82.4	47.8	125	77.8	81.2	85.8	42.7	620
50	61	Robert Gordon	86.8	80.5	20.8	157	81.6	77.6	89.4	51.6	614
51	59	Edinburgh Napier	83.5	80	32.9	155	80	84.2	85.2	51.4	609
52	55	Portsmouth	85.8	83	39.1	114	75.1	75.9	92.7	51.3	603
53	40=	Arts London	83.6	79	46	141	60.5	79.3	91.9	73.3	600
54	62	Chichester	88.5	79.9	20.1	120	74.8	77	90.9	39	597
55	63	Stirling	82.2	77.5	43.8	171	75.3	71.9	91.8	30.1	590
56	40=	Kent	81.6	77.4	52.9	117	72.1	78.6	91.9	57	589
57	68	West of England	84.3	80.6	35.7	122	76.2	75.2	91.5	62.5	586
58	70	Plymouth	84.2	79.9	38.6	127	79.7	71.7	91.5	63.5	581
59	64	Bangor	84.2	81.4	51.3	123	71.6	71.6	89.3	65.7	577
60	60	Hull	87.4	82.5	42.4	109	75.8	71.8	88.4	53.4	574
61	66=	Liverpool John Moores	85.8	84.4	32.8	124	73.7	73.6	88.9	56.9	573
62	74	Abertay	86.9	82.8	24.6	160	70.9	79.8	85.4	29.8	571
63	84=	Edge Hill	86.4	84.5	26.3	119	77.6	72.3	91.2	33.5	564
64=	56	Lincoln	84	80.2	38.4	111	72.9	75.2	91.8	52.1	563
64=	57=	West London	88.7	86.3	28.7	114	69.4	77.6	85.4	76	563
66	105=	Queen Margaret, Edinburgh	85.6	79.8	27.3	165	67	84.1	91.5	29.4	559
67	83	Hertfordshire	85.5	83.5	39.2	118	73.1	75.9	89.7	50.5	557
68	52	St Mary's, Twickenham	86.3	81.4	29.4	108	79.8	67.9	87.6	34.6	553
69	50	Oxford Brookes	85.6	81.7	32.8	112	77.8	65.6	89.3	63.8	552
70	75	Plymouth Marjon	89.2	83.1	17.4	121	75.7	76.8	86.8	33.9	551
71	66=	Cardiff Metropolitan	84.5	81	32	122	74.4	69.4	87.4	68.7	547
72	72	Salford	84.2	78.8	37.8	122	76.6	71.3	88.2	71	541
73	78=	Arts Bournemouth	83.9	77.6	23	147	58.3	76.1	93.9	65	532
74	86	Lincoln Bishop University	91.2	86.1	11.3	107	76.6	70.5	87.6	33.9	531
75	65	Soas, London	77.9	69.7	51.9	126	75.4	79.4	86	45.1	526
76	98	Southampton Solent	87	81.5	12.6	112	66	86.3	88	50.9	523
77	76	Bath Spa	87.6	82.9	29.3	107	64.8	68.8	89.7	55.7	520
78	54	Coventry	86	81.3	33.8	114	74.4	75.6	81	60.8	515
79=	82	Bournemouth	80.7	77.7	30.7	108	75.9	73.8	89.7	70.3	514
79=	53	Harper Adams	82.6	74.7	19.5	124	74	73.4	91.7	27	514
81	109	Canterbury Christ Church	89.5	86.3	26.1	110	75.1	69	81.7	58.3	511
82	94=	South Wales	84.9	77.3	27.5	118	71.1	74.8	89.1	63.5	510
83	88	Leeds Beckett	85.2	82.7	26.7	115	70.8	71.2	87.7	46.7	507
84=	90=	Gloucestershire	84	74.4	21	112	76.4	64.4	90.9	67.9	500
84=	104	Teesside	86.5	80.9	28	114	79.2	75.4	84.7	42.2	500
86	111	Bradford	81	76.9	29.9	128	77.9	79.5	89.8	52.8	499
87=	73	Falmouth	83.3	75.2	48.8	131	58.1	76.5	89.8	43.7	498
87=	80	Goldsmiths, London	81.3	72.3	45.5	122	67.1	88.8	84.8	41	498
87=	101	Staffordshire	83.6	76.6	30	120	73.7	75.6	88	49.4	498
90=	71	Brighton	82.8	77.8	41.4	114	73.3	67.4	88.1	60.5	494
90=	112	Leeds Trinity	91.7	88.2	15.1	108	73	59.1	80.5	42.8	494
90=	94=	Liverpool Hope	89.9	84.1	22.3	113	65.2	71	86.6	47	494
93	96	Lancashire	85.6	80.6	30.4	119	74.3	69.9	85.3	60.4	493
94	97	Kingston	84.9	81.8	34.6	117	66.1	71.2	90.4	43.1	491
95	84=	Sheffield Hallam	80.7	74.1	36	116	75.5	72.8	89.7	52.5	488
96	77	Derby	87.1	81.2	21	110	73.4	67	87.2	49.3	487
97	124	Suffolk	92.2	88.7	21.8	109	72	72.4	80.3	34.2	480
98	99	Worcester	84.9	80.2	15.3	114	78.6	66.8	85.4	73.4	479
99	110	Wales Trinity St David	90.3	85.8	23.8	112	59.6	72.5	88.4	58.2	478
100	102	Greenwich	84	80.8	32.9	108	70.6	71.2	87	66.6	477
101	116	Hartpury	88.4	80.8	15.8	120	60	64.8	92.7		470
102	78=	Huddersfield	81.8	76	31.1	118	75	72.5	88.1	51.9	466
103	92	Leeds Arts	86.4	81	6	139	59.4	67.1	94.9	42.1	464
104	81	Norwich Arts	82.5	76.8	38.8	125	61.9	73.9	90.7	24.6	462
105	105=	Sunderland	88.1	82.4	30.5	124	64.7	69.6	85.1	42.2	460
106	103	Winchester	83.5	76.5	22	109	69	75	90	44	458
107	90=	Birmingham Newman	87.7	84.7	13.3	98	73.9	73.3	85	18.4	456
108	113	De Montfort	83.8	80.5	27.4	100	69.3	70.8	85	76.8	451
109	89	Chester	82.9	74.9	21.1	119	76.3	76.8	87.4	25.7	448
110	121	West of Scotland	87.9	80	19.2	139	73.5	75	77.7	33.7	445
111	100	London South Bank	83.6	77.7	28.8	108	75.4	75.2	84.6	37.7	440
112	93	York St John	86.4	79.7	19.6	115	69.1	66	87.3	31.9	439
113	107=	Birmingham City	84.3	81.2	29	123	70.4	57.4	88.1	57.7	434
114	126	East London	87.2	81.7	22.8	114	63.6	80.7	81.4	36.4	433
115	120	Westminster	83.3	83	39.7	110	61.2	67.9	86.5	50	425
116	117	Middlesex	85.9	80.4	30.4	103	64.7	71.8	81.7	48.9	422
117	107=	Brunel London	82.7	79.8	34	114	69.4	61.7	88.2	47.6	413
118=	129	Bedfordshire	86.8	81.3	30	101	66.7	61	79	80.7	403
118=	125	Northampton	85.5	79.7	13.8	104	69.7	70.1	84.3	45.4	403
120	122	Buckinghamshire New	89.2	84.7	17.6	99	69.3	54	81.7	48	394
121	123	Wolverhampton	85.7	80.4	21.6	106	73.4	69.9	84.5	10.5	393
122	115	Wrexham Glyndŵr	84.9	76.1	13.3	109	74.7	72.1	80.6	56.9	391
123	130	Anglia Ruskin	83	77.2	30.2	99	69	65.5	85	58.8	382
124=	127	London Metropolitan	83.8	80.1	29.2	94	63.4	74.9	81.7	39.2	376
124=	118	Roehampton	84.4	81.5	45.9	95	58.1	63.2	89.1	18.2	376
126	119	Greater Manchester	85	78.1	10.6	115	74.8	67.7	82.7	13.9	363
127	87	Creative Arts	80.9	71.6	41.2	119	56.8	73	81.3	46.5	357
128	114	Buckingham	80.4	65.9	n/a	133	76.4	81.5	83.2	n/a	356
129	128	Cumbria	79.2	71.5	13.6	110	74.8	71.4	85.5	27.8	322
130	131	Royal Agricultural	72	73.1	24.2	117	68.7	66.9	88.1	23.6	289

How the guide was compiled

Our league table is made up of eight key indicators.

Teaching quality The teaching quality measure reflects the average scores of the teaching, learning opportunities, assessment and feedback, and academic support themes. Students answer on a scale from 1 (top) to 4 (bottom), and the score in the table is based on the percentage of positive responses (options 1 and 2).
Source: NSS, 2025

Student experience The student experience measure is drawn from the average NSS scores in the organisation and management, learning resources, and student voice themes. Students answer on a scale from 1 (top) to 4 (bottom) and the score in the table is based on the percentage of positive responses (options 1 and 2).
Source: NSS, 2025

Research quality A Times analysis of the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF), which rewards quality and quantity of research work. There are no scores in this category for Buckingham (as a private university it chose not to submit to REF 2021).
Sources: REF 2021

Entry standards Mean tariff point scores on entry for first-year, first-degree students aged under 21 based on A- and AS-levels and Highers and Advanced Highers, and other equivalent qualifications (for example, international baccalaureate). Two years of data were used to partially offset the inflation in tariff due to pandemic disruption. Source: Hesa, 2019-20 (double weighted) and 2023-24

Graduate prospects The proportion of students in high-skilled or graduate-level jobs or in graduate-level study 15 months after graduating.
Source: Hesa, 2021-22 student cohorts, published 2024

Good honours The proportion graduating with firsts or 2:1 degrees. Unclassified degrees were excluded.
Source: Hesa, 2023-24

Continuation rates The percentage of UK-domiciled full-time undergraduate students still in higher education after one year, who either continue with the same provider or transfer to another UK institution. Two years of data were used in the calculation this year to balance out the change in continuation rates due to pandemic disruption. The pre-pandemic year (2018-19) was double weighted.
Source: Hesa, 2023-24

People and Planet Universities are assessed against 14 ethical and environmental criteria. Approximately 45 per cent of marks come from universities' performance on environmental indicators, taken from the Hesa 2022-23 Estates Management Record. The remaining marks are based on analysis of institutional policies on sustainable issues.
Source People and Planet

Academics warn of a cheating crisis

More students rely on artificial intelligence in assessments, and it's harder to detect. By **Jennifer Kennedy**

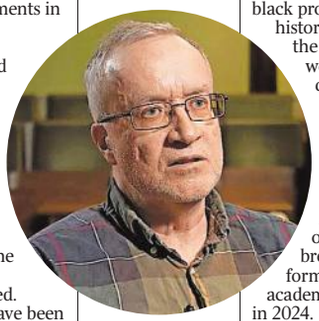
Students' rampant use of generative artificial intelligence to cheat in assessments has become a "crisis" that universities are failing to address, senior academics have warned.

Andy Hamilton, who resigned as the chair of Durham University's board of examiners for philosophy in June citing concerns over students' use of AI in assessments, said it had become impossible to detect when the technology had been used because of the rapid improvements in its capabilities.

"It's an emergency, because we're giving away degrees, and in many cases we've got good reason to suppose that we're giving a first to a student who may not have produced this work themselves," he said.

More than 2,000 undergraduates at Russell Group universities were punished for misusing AI in the 2024-25 academic year, data collected by The Times showed. About 700 were believed to have been caught in 2023-24.

Investigations into academic misconduct at the University of Cambridge have quadrupled since the widespread adoption of generative AI after the launch of ChatGPT in 2022.



Andy Hamilton

Jason Arday, who was the youngest black professor in Cambridge's history, resigned last week after the university announced it would investigate his academic qualifications and allegations of research misconduct — he has denied plagiarism.

In the past academic year Cambridge investigated 78 students for academic misconduct, which included AI-related and plagiarism offences, and found 67 breaches. The university formally recorded its first case of academic misconduct involving AI in 2024.

Most Russell Group universities allow students to take online, open-book examinations, introduced during the pandemic as a way of holding assessments while adhering to social distancing rules.

> "It's an emergency because we are giving away degrees

Michael Draper, chair of the academic regulations board at Swansea University and an expert in academic integrity, said it was surprising that universities continued to use the format.

He said he had seen "greater urgency" from universities regarding AI and expected to see more institutions moving towards "more secure forms of assessment" in the coming year, including oral examinations. However, Andrew Gunn, a senior education lecturer at the University of Manchester, said that while the sector was in the "early days" of adapting to the technology, universities had not become complacent to the threat and were "learning from one another".

"Universities can and should integrate AI into their assessments," he said. "AI exists, and we can't pretend it's not there."

Art and design

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Oxford	80	77	88.8	228		100
2	University College London	92.5	87.8	64.7	198	80.8	98.8
3	Goldsmiths, London	91.8	87.7	57.5	171	72.9	93.1
4	Loughborough	84.7	80.5	51.7	172	81.2	92.9
5	Leeds	83.1	80.9	54.8	163	76	90.7
6	Dundee	86	76.8	57.2	193	66	90.5
7	Kingston	87.3	82.6	63	158	69.2	90.2
8	Newcastle	80.1	75.2	61	199	62.7	89
9	Manchester	87.3	86.7	63	136	68.4	88.6
10=	Manchester Metropolitan	85.6	82.6	51.7	145	72.7	88.5
10=	Sunderland	89.6	82.9	49.8	122	76.2	88.5
12=	Lancaster	81.7	77.2	59.5	159		88.4
12=	Reading	84.9	84	51.8	125	77.3	88.4
14	Edinburgh Napier	89.2	74.4	23.5	179	73	88
15=	Northumbria	87	80.2	45.8	141	73.7	87.9
15=	Nottingham Trent	88.1	85.2	53	126	72.5	87.9
17	Southampton	88.9	83.9	56.5	130	67.8	87.2
18	Glasgow Caledonian	91.9	92.1	13.8	172	68.3	86.8
19	Sheffield Hallam	87.9	81.4	57	125	67.9	86.5
20	Bangor	98.6	95.3	40.2	110	66.7	86.4
21=	Cardiff Metropolitan	84.8	77.1	56.2	124	70.8	86.2
21=	Edinburgh	84.9	81.5	54	160	61.5	86.2
23	Ulster	88.4	79.9	54.5	124	67.9	86.1
24=	Glasgow	59.2	56.6	68.8	202		85.6
24=	Robert Gordon	94.1	85.3	13.8	150	70.1	85.6
26	Coventry	82.8	75	54.2	119	72.7	85.5
27	Arts London	84.7	79.6	46	146	65.5	85.2
28	Bournemouth	84.3	84.2	38.5	100	78.7	85.1
29	Staffordshire	86.8	77.6	53.5	125	65.8	84.9
30	Westminster	85.5	83.1	75.5	131	55	84.8
31=	Canterbury Christ Church	95.1	91.8	38	104		84.6
31=	Worcester	89.3	82.7	19.2	125	75.2	84.6
33	Portsmouth	85.9	80.3	41.8	114	71.8	84.5
34	Teesside	89.3	82.4	49.2	123	63.2	84.3
35	Greenwich	84.2	79.9	30	114	76.9	84.2
36=	Falmouth	84.8	74.2	48.8	146	62	84
36=	Oxford Brookes	92.5	82.6	25.5	140	64.7	84
38	Liverpool John Moores	85.9	81.8	38.2	151	61	83.7
39	West of England	85.9	78.5	36	145	63.9	83.6
40	Lancashire	90.4	89	35.2	123	63.3	83.5
41	Abertay	81.6	74.9		173	73.3	83.1
42	De Montfort	86.9	80.3	32	121	68.3	82.9
43	Middlesex	88.9	80.6	41.2	110	64.8	82.6
44	Aberystwyth	82.8	74.4	41	136	63.9	82.5
44	Norwich Arts	85.6	80	38.8	126	63.8	82.5
46	Wolverhampton	89.3	83.4	35.2	134	59.5	82.4
47	Lincoln	85.8	78.2	43.8	118	63.8	82.3
48=	Birmingham City	89.1	84.6	31.2	130	60.9	82.1
48=	Brighton	79.2	72.2	53	131	62.6	82.1
48=	London Metropolitan	92.3	86.5	42.2	108	59.5	82.1

Business

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Oxford	86.4	80.5	66.2	214	98.2	100
2	Warwick	90	91.9	65.2	188	89.5	99.2
3	King's College London	85.4	87.4	63	191	90.9	97.7
4	London School of Economics	84.1	84.3	69	173	96.4	97.4
5	University College London	87.8	88.1	62.3	169	91.3	97
6=	Bath	85.1	84.7	65.2	161	92.1	95.8
6=	St Andrews	83.7	82.7	48.2	216	85.8	95.8
8	Strathclyde	85	83.4	52.5	205	84.2	95.7
9	Edinburgh	77.6	80.1	59	188	88.4	93.8
10=	Leeds	83.1	85.9	62.3	155	84.1	93.5
10=	Manchester	82.1	82.9	66.2	159	84.1	93.5
12=	Durham	83.1	85.4	55.8	143	91.8	93.3
12=	Liverpool	86.1	87.5	58	140	85.5	93.3
14	City St George's	81.5	80.3	67.2	172	78.7	93
15	Exeter	82.7	82.7	63.5	143	87.7	92.9
16	Loughborough	82.2	85.2	49.2	147	90.3	92.3
17=	Bristol	80.8	82.4	46	160	88.9	91.8
17=	Lancaster	83.7	83.5	59.2	135	84.1	91.8
19	Aberdeen	83.5	84.8	32.2	177	84.4	91.7
20	Dundee	90	87.6	28.5	177	74.6	91.6
21	Birmingham	80.1	82.1	55.2	144	88.2	91.5
22=	Cardiff	80.5	83.9	56	147	82.5	91.1
22=	Glasgow	70.7	75.3	57.2	206	80.6	91.1
24	Sheffield	83.2	88.7	48.8	138	81.7	91
25	Queen's, Belfast	81.6	82.5	40.5	148	86.6	90.4
26	Surrey	84.9	84.3	54.8	131	77.3	90.3
27	Nottingham	80	84.9	46.8	149	81.7	90.2
28	Southampton	82.5	82.1	52	131	82.5	90.1
29=	Stirling	80	83.5	38.2	174	75.1	89.6
29=	York	79.7	83.5	50.5	136	81.9	89.6
31	Aberystwyth	94	91.7	22.8	124	74.7	89.3
32	Sussex	82.8	83.5	50.7	125	78.3	89.1
33	Reading	79.7	81.4	46.2	125	84.5	88.6
34	Queen Margaret, Edinburgh	91.6	86.8	7.5	163	72.4	88.5
35	Manchester Metropolitan	87.3	85	42.8	123	71.9	88.4
36	Heriot-Watt	76.4	77.7	38.2	168	79.2	88.2
37	Glasgow Caledonian	82.6	82.2	25.8	170	73	88.1
38=	Aston	80.1	78.4	43.5	126	83.8	88
38=	Ulster	83.3	81.4	45.8	119	78.3	88
40	Royal Holloway	82.4	85.3	43	123	75.6	87.9
41=	Canterbury Christ Church	91.9	89.9	38	100	68.3	87.7
41=	East Anglia	79	80.7	57.8	119	75.5	87.7
43	Newcastle	75.7	79.5	40.5	141	83.4	87.6
44=	Nottingham Trent	87	86.9	34.2	110	75.2	87.4
44=	Robert Gordon	90.4	89.2	19	143	65.9	87.4
44=	Staffordshire	94	90.6	38.8	104	60.9	87.4
47=	Hull	88.2	89.9	29.5	98	77.2	87.2
47=	Queen Mary, London	80.1	80.9	53.2	152	61.2	87.2
47=	Swansea	82.4	81.9	38.8	121	77.4	87.2
50	Leicester	80.5	82.5	45.8	121	75.4	87.1

Computer science

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Imperial College	86.9	84.9	94.8	220	97	100
2	Oxford	89.7	81.4	85.8	211	100	99.4
3	Cambridge	87.8	80.5	78.2	216	94.8	97.3
4	Birmingham	92.4	92.4	82.8	167	97.2	97.2
5	St Andrews	88.4	90	41.2	218	99.1	95.6
6	University College London	77.9	80.2	82.2	199	95.2	94.2
7	Warwick	78.8	81	81.8	198	93	94
8	Bristol	84.6	83.3	76	176	94.7	93.8
9	Glasgow	79.8	80.8	71.8	209	91.4	93.5
10	Durham	82.3	81.9	59	199	96.6	93.4
11	Manchester	78.1	78.3	71.2	189	97.5	92.8
12	Edinburgh	71.5	70.1	81.2	212	92	91.9
13	Sheffield	81.5	84.5	69.8	168	92.5	91.5
14	Bath	81.7	85	52.2	187	93.1	91.2
15	Dundee	87.9	81.1	53.5	184	86.8	90.9
16	Southampton	74.7	76.2	70.8	174	92.4	89.6
17	Queen Mary, London	81.7	80.7	74.2	155	84.9	89.2
18	Leeds	76.3	75.9	72	161	92.1	89.1
19	King's College London	71	72.2	68	176	96	88.9
20=	Lancaster	79.1	79.8	64.8	151	92.4	88.7
20=	Loughborough	84.2	86.5	46.5	156	90.3	88.7
20=	Strathclyde	78.8	74.4	46.2	202	87.6	88.7
23	Liverpool	79.7	82.6	61	137	94.2	88.2
24	York	73.9	73.8	72.5	153	93.5	88.1
25	Surrey	82	85.5	50.5	139	92.4	87.7
26	Royal Holloway	80.2	78.6	65	127	91.8	87.2
27	Exeter	79.1	81.8	45.5	148	93.8	87.1
28	Sussex	81.6	82.7	59.2	131	88.6	86.9
29	Nottingham	73	73.3	63.5	161	89.7	86.6
30	Swansea	83.9	83.6	46.5	128	90.7	86.5
31	Cardiff	73.8	74.9	57.8	152	91.7	86.2
32	Newcastle	73.6	76.2	60.5	137	91.9	85.6
33	Leicester	82.4	83.1	41.8	131	89.4	85.5
34	Queen's, Belfast	71.5	75.4	51	148	92.3	84.9
35=	Essex	80.1	80.5	53.5	126	85.7	84.8
35=	Heriot-Watt	71.3	70.9	39.5	179	90	84.8
37	Edinburgh Napier	78.8	76.2	47.2	155	82.6	84.7
38	Manchester Metropolitan	85.3	82.8	29.2	138	83.6	84.1
39	East Anglia	80.2	79.9	41.8	120	88.7	83.7
40	Aberystwyth	86.1	79.5	43.8	110	84	83.6
41	Ulster	82.1	80.4	38	118	87.2	83.4
42	Aston	80.4	78.1	29.2	131	89.5	83.2
43	Aberdeen	73.1	74.2	44	161		83.1
44=	Glasgow Caledonian	83.6	81.5	13.8	159	81.2	82.9
44=	Northumbria	83.4	79.3	25.8	126	87.6	82.9
44=	Portsmouth	86.1	84.4	32.8	119	80.7	82.9
47	Brunel	85	81.2	37.5	121	78.7	82.5
48	Reading	77.5	79.1	39.8	120	87	82.4
49	Worcester	89.1	89.9	12.5	107	86	82.3
50	Abertay	85	80		162	82.8	82.2

Economics

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Warwick	89.1	88.4	76.5	192	93.3	100
2	London School of Economics	85	86.4	80.8	193	96.2	99.8
3=	Cambridge	81.2	75	68.2	213	96.2	97.1
3=	Oxford	86.3	75.6	62	205	94.8	97.1
5	St Andrews	89.3	88.2	31.2	217	91	95.9
6=	Durham	86.5	86.5	55.8	173	92.9	95.7
6=	University College London	77.4	83.4	72.5	181	94.8	95.7
8	Leeds	81.8	89.5	62.3	166	91.2	95
9=	Nottingham	79.6	84.4	64.5	172	91.1	94.3
9=	Strathclyde	84.4	83.1	52.5	193	86.6	94.3
11	Glasgow	76.5	77.9	57.2	215	87.8	93.6
12	Heriot-Watt	89.1	86.1	38.2	172	86.4	93.2
13	Birmingham	82.9	84.5	55.2	151	91.2	93.1
14	Sheffield	86.6	89.4	48.8	153	85.9	93
15	Liverpool	85.8	88.8	58	141	84.4	92.9
16=	Bristol	77.2	79.7	60.2	174	90.4	92.6
16=	Lancaster	84.2	84	59.2	136	88.7	92.6
18	Exeter	82.2	85.3	44.8	164	91.4	92.5
19	Edinburgh	75.6	76.7	50.2	196	92.8	92.3
20	Aston	90.1	89.7	43.5	119	89	92.2
21	Loughborough	83.8	85.7	49.2	157	85.7	92.1
22	Bath	82	87.5	25.2	178	94.4	91.8
23	Queen Mary, London	78.5	81.4	60.5	155	87.4	91.7
24=	Cardiff	79.2	80.5	56	146	90.7	91.3
24=	Manchester	79.7	81.6	54.5	154	87.6	91.3
24=	Surrey	86.2	89.1	54.2	126	81.8	91.3
27=	East Anglia	84.6	86.3	46.2	127	87.8	90.8
27=	Stirling	87.5	84.1	38.2	152	82.4	90.8
29	Queen's, Belfast	79.5	82.4	40.5	152	93	90.7
30	Brighton	96.3	95.6	28.5	93		90.5
31	Ulster	86.9	86.9	45.8	117	81.3	89.7
32=	Southampton	80.2	83.1	42	141	87.4	89.5
32=	Sussex	84.1	83.5	52	126	79.6	89.5
34	Leicester	82.3	85.3	45.8	117	86.3	89.3
35	King's College London	82.2	83.3	53.8	185	96.2	89.2
36	Royal Holloway	82	84.9	59.5	118	78.9	88.7
37	Essex	85.2	85.4	29.5	108	71.2	88.4
38	Hull	87	83	32.2	108	88.6	88.3
39=	Aberdeen	86	87	29	160	70	88.2
39=	Hertfordshire	96.5	97.9	38.8	112	63.7	88.2
41	Swansea	90.7	88.4	33.2	106	73.6	88.1
42	Coventry	91.1	89.9	34.2	101	75.9	88
43	Nottingham Trent	89.1	88.6	48.8	108	75.9	87.8
44	York	71.1	73.4	28.7	145	90.2	87.5
45	Plymouth	87.3	81.7	42.8	117	80	87.1
46=	Manchester Metropolitan	81.6	85.8	37.8	115	76.1	86.9
46=	Portsmouth	87.6	89	40.5	110	70.2	86.9
48=	Newcastle	72.2	77.8	46.2	146	86.8	86.8
48=	Reading	80	76	26	113	82.9	86.8
50	Oxford Brookes	81.5	85.4		110	81.8	85.7

English

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1=	Oxford	90.7	78	69.8	187	83.3	100
1=	St Andrews	87.1	84.1	61.8	202	84.3	100
3	Cambridge	84.4	70.9	65	201	88.3	99.5
4	University College London	90.4	86.4	61.5	178	83.2	99
5	Leicester	96.1	93.4	67.8	115	86.9	98.6
6	Aberdeen	94.8	92.4	53.8	167	80.2	98.2
7	York	88.9	86.8	70.2	155	81.9	97.9
8	Strathclyde	88.5	86.3	58.8	195	76.5	97.5
9	Durham	86.2	73.2	55.5	188	85.6	97.4
10	Nottingham	88.8	86.9	70.5	148	81.4	97.3
11	Warwick	87	79.1	64.8	158	84.6	97
12	Southampton	86.6	88.3	69.2	142	82.4	96.6
13	Birmingham City	94	94.2	65.5	112	82.6	96.5
14	Newcastle	86.8	82.8	83.8	137	78	96.4
15	Birmingham	88.6	85.5	68.8	147	77.1	95.7
16	King's College London	83.5	80.1	70.8	161	78.9	95.6
17	Exeter	84.1	83.7	59.5	159	82.5	95.5
18	Glasgow	84.9	78.8	61.8	193	73.2	95.3
19=	Leeds	81.7	79.9	73.2	152	79.4	95
19=	Royal Holloway	87.4	84.5	60.5	135	82.9	95
19=	Surrey	89	81.7	63	126	83.4	95
22	Edinburgh Napier	93.2	90.7	48.2	156	75.5	94.9
23	Liverpool	87.1	87.5	65.5	132	80	94.8
24=	Cardiff	87.9	85.1	67.2	133	77	94.3
24=	Edinburgh	76.5	70.7	74.5	174	79.1	94.3
26	Sheffield	88.4	89.1	62.3	150	73.2	94.2
27	Canterbury Christ Church	96.8	87.1	53.2		72.3	94
28	Liverpool John Moores	93.9	90.7	58	113	77.3	93.9
29	Lancaster	93.3	87.8	48	136	75.9	93.4
30	Manchester Metropolitan	89.9	85.6	61.8	117	78.1	93.3
31	Loughborough	91	83.7	54.5	138	75.1	93.2
32	Sussex	87.2	84.2	67	127	74.6	93
33	Keele	95.6	91.1	54.8	110	74.4	92.9
34	Manchester	81.1	76.2	66.5	157	75	92.8
35=	Aston	86.3	84.1	38	112	91.5	92.7
35=	Queen's, Belfast	87.5	83.1	47.5	144	78.5	92.7
37	East Anglia	86.2	82.7	67	132	73.1	92.5
38	Queen Mary, London	89.2	84.7	59.5	136	71.4	92.3
39=	Bath Spa	87.5	80.6	51.7	115	82.8	92.2
39=	Teesside	98.7	90.7	49.2	92		92.2
41	Northumbria	92.1	85.4	54	122	74.1	92.1
42	Reading	87.4	80.1	51	119	81.4	92
43=	Bristol	78.8	75.4	54.5	164	77.7	91.8
43=	Swansea	92.2	87.5	60	130	67.3	91.8
45	Oxford Brookes	93.3	78.4	72.8	116	66.5	91.7
46	Huddersfield	88.6	74.5	60	106	80	91.6
47=	Brunel	94.1	95	42.8	115	73.3	91.5
47=	Dundee	86.7	82.9	40.8	166	72.6	91.5
49	Sunderland			40.5	96	87.5	91.4
50	Kingston	92.4	79.1	47	126		91.3

Law

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Cambridge	86.6	80.4	59.2	201	96.9	100
2	London School of Economics	87.2	85.5	61.3	199	87	98.5
3	University College London	81.8	75.9	74.5	182	93.1	98
4=	Durham	86	81.5	59.5	185	90.5	97.5
4=	Glasgow	76.2	74.6	66.8	232	88.7	97.5
6	Oxford	83.6	70	62	198	91.8	97
7	Strathclyde	87.7	87.5	45.8	205	84.4	96.9
8	Sheffield	87.3	89.4	55	155	91.7	96.7
9	Edinburgh	76.8	71.6	64.2	212	90.5	96.3
10	Bristol	80.2	80.9	67.5	173	88.4	95.7
11	Queen's, Belfast	78.3	83.7	62.3	169	91.8	95.5
12	Aberdeen	84.7	86.5	43.2	196	85.4	95.4
13	Leeds	81.2	85.8	66.5	167	83.3	94.9
14	King's College London	80.9	73.6	56.2	194	86.9	94.7
15	Queen Mary, London	82.5	82.8	57	163	86.9	94.4
16	Dundee	88.2	82.8	29.2	192	85.8	94.2
17=	Southampton	83.3	85	46.5	149	91.3	93.8
17=	Warwick	79.6	76.6	62	163	88.1	93.8
19	Nottingham	84.3	82.8	53.5	161	83.9	93.6
20	Ulster	86.9	82.5	55	132	87.5	93.5
21	Surrey	89.3	84.4	41.5	129	88	92.8
22	Exeter	77.3	77.7	54.8	158	90	92.7
23	Birmingham	77.1	77.2	61.5	152	88.4	92.6
24	Lancaster	86.4	86	48	145	81.9	92.5
25	York	80.7	81.7	49.2	154	85.9	92.2
26	Liverpool	79.4	83.2	51.5	146	85.4	91.7
27	Cardiff	74.4	78.8	60.5	149	87.3	91.6
28	Aston	85.7	87.7	43.5	122	84.7	91.3
29=	Manchester	79.9	76.4	40.8	159	86	90.8
29=	Newcastle	79	81.6	41.8	146	87.6	90.8
29=	Stirling	79.9	76.2	38.5	194	78.2	90.8
32	Kent	81.1	80.4	69.8	120	78.4	90.7
33	East Anglia	86.1	86.9	32.5	116	88.4	90.6
34	Royal Holloway, London	80.8	83.8	38	134	87.2	90.3
35	Northumbria	86.2	85.1	30.8	125	85.1	90
36=	Manchester Metropolitan	88.5	87.8	42.8	115	77.4	89.8
36=	Nottingham Trent	86.5	84.7	53	109	77.5	89.8
36=	Sussex	83.9	84.8	44.8	126	80.2	89.8
39	Leicester	81.7	82.9	32	132	86.1	89.4
40	Edinburgh Napier	86.4	85.8	5.5	168	82.4	89.2
41	Essex	83.1	83.5	56	118	74.6	89
42	Hertfordshire	88.6	87.3	29	117	78.9	88.7
43	South Wales	87.9	84	33.5	115	78.6	88.5
44	Kingston	89.6	87.9	27	102	80	88.2
45	West of England	84.4	82.5	46.5	109	75.7	87.9
46	Plymouth	82.9	81.3	37.2	114	79.7	87.6
47=	Edge Hill	90	91.5	36	115	67.5	87.5
47=	Robert Gordon	84.9	80.3		148	87.2	87.5
49=	Abertay	85.3	84	5		87.8	87.4
49=	Gloucestershire	91.2	84.4	8.8	104	84.8	87.4

Mathematics

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Oxford	86.6	78.5	83.2	212	93.6	100
2	Imperial College	86.4	86.9	76.8	211	89.8	99.1
3	Cambridge	87.3	82.5	78	225	87.2	99
4	St Andrews	90.5	88.3	57.5	230	88.5	98.7
5	Heriot-Watt	88.5	88.4	66	190	90	97.6
6	Warwick	86	84.9	73.5	200	87.9	97.4
7	Bristol	82.6	80.5	77	188	91	96.6
8	Sheffield	90.6	90.3	59.2	154	85.9	94.8
9	Bath	81.3	83.2	61.5	189	90.2	94.7
10	Lancaster	88.3	83.3	70	160	83.7	94.5
11	Durham	85.3	79	48.8	204	88.9	94.3
12=	Birmingham	88.7	83.6	58.8	161	87	94.2
12=	London School of Economics	79.9	80.7	64	175	92.2	94.2
14=	Glasgow	76.3	73.5	74.5	216	84.6	93.9
14=	Manchester	83.8	84.2	66	172	85	93.9
16	University College London	83.4	84.7	57.5	176	87.4	93.6
17	Edinburgh	75.1	72.6	66	218	86.3	93
18=	Queen's, Belfast	87.9	80.3	44.5	169	88.2	92.8
18=	Strathclyde	86.4	85.1	43.2	210	80.5	92.8
20	Exeter	83.9	81.5	64.1	161	82.7	92.3
21	Nottingham	81.4	81.7	57.5	164	87.5	92.2
22=	Dundee	86.6	84.5	55.2	186	73.3	91.2
22=	Southampton	82.4	81	61.5	164	80.6	91.2
24=	Leeds	80.5	81.9	55.2	160	85.4	91.1
24=	Loughborough	84	85.3	46.5	162	83.8	91.1
24=	Manchester Metropolitan	93.7	92.3	45.5	124	79.2	91.1
24=	Swansea	87.9	87.2	58.2	117	82.7	91.1
28=	Aberdeen	87.2	84.8	40	170		91
28=	York	84	81.4	55	161	81.4	91
30	King's College London	83.6	83.8	59.5	169	75.8	90.7
31=	Aston	90.9	93.7	35.2	120	84.9	90.6
31=	Cardiff	82.5	85.5	45.5	141	88.2	90.6
33=	Leicester	82.7	78.9	51.7	119	91.8	90.5
33=	Newcastle	83.7	85.2	48	138	85.9	90.5
35	Sussex	89.4	91.9	50	131	76.5	90.2
36=	Nottingham Trent	87.4	88	59	108	80.4	90.1
36=	Reading	88.9	92.9	51.5	130	75.7	90.1
38=	Essex	90.7	92.6	29	141	80.1	89.6
38=	Hertfordshire	89.8	89	45.5	123	78.6	89.6
40=	East Anglia	86.6	87.6	44.5	136	78.8	89.2
40=	Surrey	85.1	85	33.5	141	85.5	89.2
42	Aberystwyth	95.8	90.7	22.5	118	79.2	88.7
43	Kent	83.5	80.7	46.5	136	80.9	88.5
44=	Plymouth	89.9	92.3	22.5	121	82.8	88.3
44=	Queen Mary, London	82.8	82.5	51.5	142	76.6	88.3
46	Liverpool John Moores	92.8	92.6	26	119	77.4	88.1
47	Coventry			36.8	130	83.6	88
48	City St George's	82.1	80.8	52	115	79.3	87.3
49	Stirling	75.7	64.9	41.8	174	84.2	87.1
50	Keele	89.5	79.6	27.3	131	74.7	86

Mechanical engineering

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Imperial College	88	89.2	81	222	96	100
2	Cambridge	80.4	80.8	77.2	222	97.2	97.3
3	Oxford	80.4	74.8	77.5	213	94	95.4
4	Sheffield	89.8	88.3	66.8	170	89.2	93.7
5	Bath	88.3	83	49.5	191	93	93
6	Bristol	80.7	78.9	68	176	93.3	92.2
7	Heriot-Watt	83.1	81.6	55.5	182	90.3	91.2
8	Southampton	83.4	81.1	70	168	85.8	91
9	Strathclyde	75.4	77.2	52.8	212	90.9	90.8
10	Leeds	80.7	82.4	64.8	174	87.5	90.7
11=	Birmingham	79.1	81.8	63.7	149	94.4	90.2
11=	Nottingham	82.1	82.1	59	148	93.6	90.2
13	University College London	79.9	77.2	70	179	83.2	89.8
14	Liverpool	89.9	83.7	57	143	86.4	89.7
15	Loughborough	82.5	82.8	46.5	157	94.4	89.5
16	Edinburgh	75.2	73.6	55.5	202	87.4	89.2
17	Surrey	88.2	84.3	55.2	130	88.7	89
18	Queen's, Belfast	80.7	80.9	51	158	89.7	88.4
19	Manchester	76	76.8	63	176	83.5	88
20	Dundee	84	79.8	50.2	172	81.8	87.9
21	Glasgow	64.1	59.6	61.5	212	90.8	87.5
22	Aberdeen	75.8	77.6	35.8	178	92	87
23	Lancaster	82.5	81.2	44.8	142	87.4	86.5
24	Queen Mary, London	75.8	79.2	66	146	82.3	86.4
25	Swansea	84.1	82.7	48.8	119	86.7	85.9
26	Bradford	96.1	84.1	27	120		85.8
27	Cardiff	73.2	74.5	54	141	90.6	85.6
28	Robert Gordon	79.8	73	20.5	184	90	85.5
29	Nottingham Trent	84.1	78.3	59	104	85.3	85.4
30	Leicester	85	80.6	39.8	120	88.4	85.3
31	Edinburgh Napier	82.5	85.2	22.8	147	88.2	84.9
32=	Exeter	74.2	76.3	47	147	84.8	84.2
32=	Newcastle	69.7	71.5	58.5	132	89.3	84.2
32=	Sussex	78.5	81.4	29.5	134	90.8	84.2
35=	Northumbria	85.9	84.9	43	122	77.4	83.8
35=	Plymouth	86	79.8	32.5	118	85.6	83.8
37=	Liverpool John Moores	80	83.4	45.5	114	82.4	83.3
37=	Ulster	77	71.3	49.8	122	85.8	83.3
39	Hull	86.7	79.6	36.2	110	79.6	82.4
40	Kent	80.6	77.9	41.5	111		81.9
41	Manchester Metropolitan	86.1	80.1	45.5	120	69.7	81.6
42=	Coventry	87.4	84	23.5	104	80.4	81.3
42=	Teesside	94.1	90.3	18.8	116	70.8	81.3
44	Aston	78.2	71.7	35.2	120	81.7	80.7
45	Glasgow Caledonian	78.8	77.3	12.8	154	80.3	80.6
46=	Derby	81.6	74.5	14	120	84.9	80
46=	West of Scotland	87.1	84.5	16.5		73.9	80
48=	Lincoln	84.4	72.8	24	114	79	79.9
48=	London South Bank	87.9	86.4	27.3	109	70.4	79.9
50	Brighton	70.6	67.9	36.5	98	90.2	79.5

Nursing

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	Edinburgh	84.1	82.1	55.2	189	100	100
2	Glasgow	81.9	75.8	63.5	192	97.2	98.8
3	Sheffield	90.9	89.7	63.7	139	97.5	96.8
4	Cardiff	89.9	87.4	58.8	147	96.4	96.3
5=	Leeds	83.5	81.2	65	141	98.1	95.7
5=	Queen's, Belfast	88.8	85.6	66.2	132	97	95.7
7	Hull	86.9	82.6	55.5	135	98.7	95.4
8=	Birmingham	81.5	71.9	55	144	100	95.3
8=	Southampton	84.7	80	69.8	141	96.3	95.3
10	Northumbria	85.7	84.4	53.5	134	98.9	95.2
11=	Dundee	84.3	77.3	60.8	130	99.7	95.1
11=	Glasgow Caledonian	84.1	80	61	136	98.2	95.1
13	East Anglia	89.5	86.8	55.5	130	97.1	94.9
14	Coventry	87.7	79	47.2	130	99.2	94.6
15=	Keele	87.4	76.5	66.2	114	99.4	94.5
15=	Queen Margaret, Edinburgh	91.7	91.9	36.5	162	92.3	94.5
17=	Exeter	87.4	70.5	54.5	135		94.4
17=	Ulster	94.8	94	53.5	120	95.4	94.4
19	Nottingham	82.5	75	66.8	136	96.6	94.2
20	Surrey	84.9	77.7	58	129	97.6	94.1
21=	Hertfordshire	87.1	84.6	48	120	98.8	93.9
21=	King's College London	86.5	82.6	76.2	134	92.7	93.9
23=	Bangor	78.1	70.6	59.8	137	98.7	93.8
23=	Edinburgh Napier	83.7	79.2	40.5	144	97.4	93.8
25=	Kingston	89.4	86.2	38.5	124	97.7	93.5
25=	Plymouth	84.2	76.1	39.5	138	98.1	93.5
27	Aston	87.7	87.5	46	120		93.3
28=	Liverpool	93.2	93.6	46.8	129	92.7	93.1
28=	Swansea	74.7	62.8	66.8	129	99.4	93.1
30	Manchester	80.1	76.1	71.2	137	93.7	92.9
31	Essex	87.5	82.9	28.5	133	97.3	92.8
32=	Oxford Brookes	91.9	85.5	37.8	113	97.3	92.7
32=	Portsmouth	89	85.6	41.2	111	98.2	92.7
34	York	79.3	72.7	65	133	95.2	92.6
35=	Lincoln	77.9	70.6	55.8	125	98.4	92.4
35=	Robert Gordon	81.7	70.7	24.5	138	99.7	92.4
37	West London	88.5	83.8	29.5	124	97.2	92.3
38	Stirling	74.6	68	44	136	98.9	92.1
39=	East London	88.8	85.9	25.5		96.1	91.9
39=	Nottingham Trent	85.1	76.8	43.5	121		91.9
41	Lancashire	83.7	75.2	35.5	135	96	91.8
42=	Staffordshire	83.2	77.4	30.8	120	98.9	91.7
42=	Sunderland	85.5	78.4	30.2	129	96.7	91.7
44	Derby	87.5	80.2	24	120	97.8	91.5
45	West of England	80.9	70.8	42.8	126	97	91.4
46	Birmingham City	77.5	69.3	37.8	135	97.4	91.3
47=	Liverpool John Moores	81.9	76.1	26.5	130	97.3	91.2
47=	Salford	81.1	70.2	37	127	97.3	91.2
47=	West of Scotland	84.9	74	30.8	134	95.3	91.2
47=	York St John	93.9	84.5	13.8	119		91.2

Politics

Rank	University	Teaching Quality	Student Experience	Research Quality	Entry Points	Graduate Prospects	Overall Score
1	St Andrews	92.1	87.1	47	201	90	100
2	London School of Economics	84	83	65.8	188	91.4	99
3	Oxford	85.1	72.1	61.3	197	91.9	98.3
4	Strathclyde	85.8	81.9	70.5	193	75.6	96.8
5	Sheffield	88.6	87.1	58	152	84.6	96.3
6	University College London	79.9	78.3	64.5	176	89.5	96.1
7	Warwick	85.8	85.1	60.5	166	82.6	96
8	Durham	84.6	82.6	42.5	180	88.6	95.4
9	Cambridge	85	68.5	50.2	195	85.4	95.1
10	King's College London	84.6	81.8	52.2	179	81.9	94.9
11	York	85.3	81.4	57.5	151	85.3	94.8
12	Birmingham	83.9	82.7	51.5	146	87	94
13	Royal Holloway	84.9	80.6	67.2	122	82.7	93.6
14	Glasgow	78.7	74.3	50.2	202	80	93.1
15	Stirling	91.3	83.8	28.7	168	77.4	92.8
16=	Edinburgh	74.2	69.8	66.5	191	79.8	92.5
16=	Queen Mary, London	85.2	81.1	61.3	138	76.3	92.5
18=	Bath	82.8	84.6	31.8	166	85.6	92.4
18=	Bristol	81.2	80.1	50.7	167	79.4	92.4
18=	Exeter	80.1	78.9	57.5	152	82	92.4
21	Nottingham	85.1	83.2	46	146	79.3	92.1
22	Surrey	92.5	89.4	40.2	123	75	91.9
23	Manchester	81.1	78	60.5	155	74.7	91.6
24	SOAS London	81.4	71.3	55.5	135	84.5	91.4
25=	Loughborough	87	88.3	29.5	137	81.9	91.3
25=	Reading	88.7	84.3	49.2	114	77	91.3
27	Aston	82.9	83	49	112	83.5	90.8
28	Northumbria	87.9	83.5	42	116	78.8	90.6
29=	Aberdeen	85.7	84.7	23.5	169	76.6	90.5
29=	Aberystwyth	91.2	86.1	42.8	111	73.4	90.5
31=	Leicester	89.5	89.1	36.8	112	76.6	90.4
31=	Newcastle	81.5	83.1	39.5	151	78.6	90.4
33=	Lancaster	82	76.7	49	136	79.1	90.3
33=	Sussex	85.7	83.3	55.7	127	70.2	90.3
35	Swansea	89.3	86.9	31.5	110	80.2	90.1
36	Essex	87.1	85.3	60.5	122	64.4	89.9
37=	Nottingham Trent	91.1	91.3	29.5	106	75.9	89.7
37=	Southampton	80.7	79.7	39.8	133	82.4	89.7
39	Liverpool	85.1	82.6	39.8	130	75.7	89.6
40	Queen's, Belfast	80.2	75.5	40.8	144	79.2	89.1
41=	Cardiff	80.2	78.3	49	137	74.7	89
41=	Leeds	79	78.9	35.8	154	78.8	89
43=	Bournemouth	86.9	76.8	47.2	87	77.6	88.4
43=	Brunel	91	81.5	35	95	74.2	88.4
43=	East Anglia	82	76.7	56.2	121	70.6	88.4
46	Salford	82.6	82	51.7	112	71.3	88.2
47	Lincoln	91	86.7	34	101	69.6	88.1
48=	Coventry	92	90.1	39.5	100	63.6	88
48=	Portsmouth	85.4	74.5	51.7	111	70.3	88
50	Plymouth	81.8	75.6	37.9	116	80.1	87.9

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